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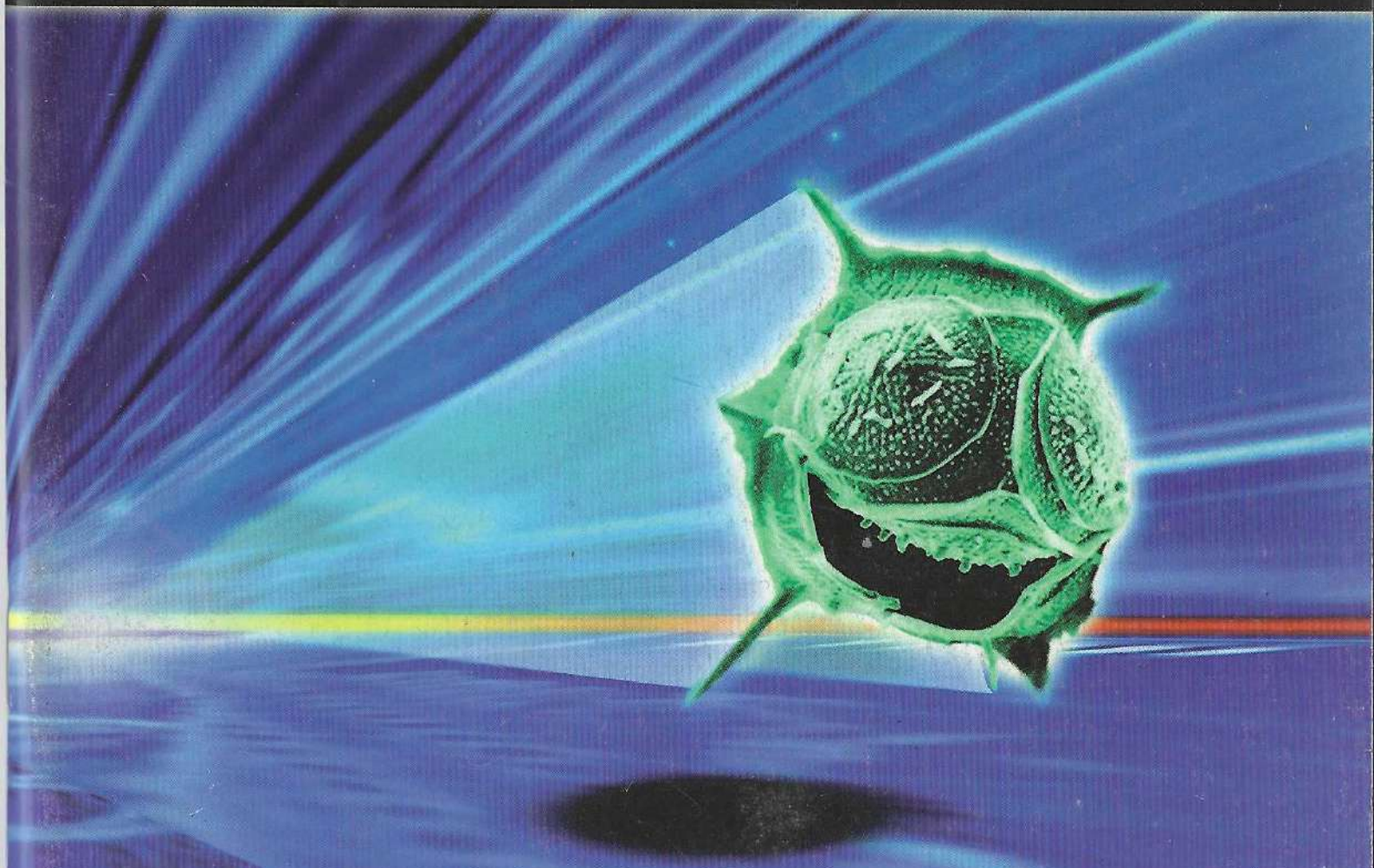

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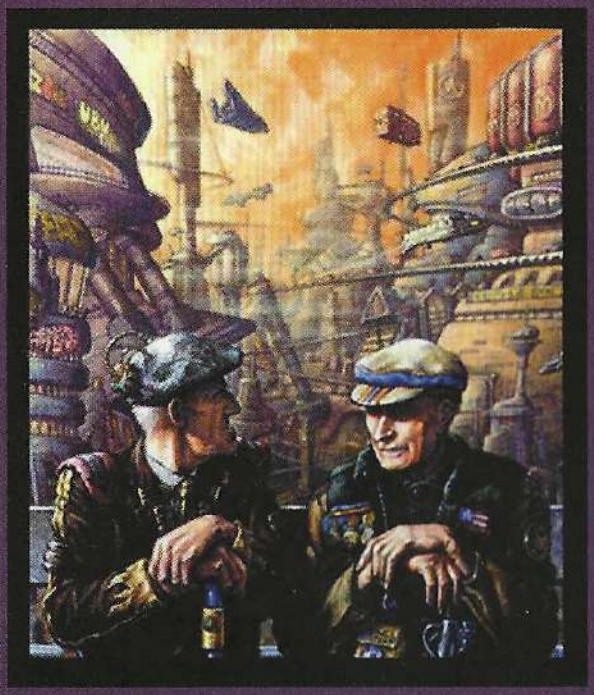

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CHARLIE HALL
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>Disclaimer: Views expressed in Overload Magazine are not necessarily those held by the editors or staff. In event of the unintentional dissemination of disinformation, we apologise.

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neuton

TONEMAN 06
Basic Implant: the revenge of the 101
12"

Basic Implant - the fellows, Sven and Alex, known from Fine Audio Recordings once again out on their own imprint.The name as program for this release: a struggling 101-line as the leadsound for the a-side shows the still important and superior role of analogue equipment for creating floorburning techno-tracks, and indeed it works out quite well on this 12". The b-side as well a real hard smashing collection of two tracks for the later hours in the club.

BITTER SWEET MUSIC 04
Pino Shamlou: Iulina
12"

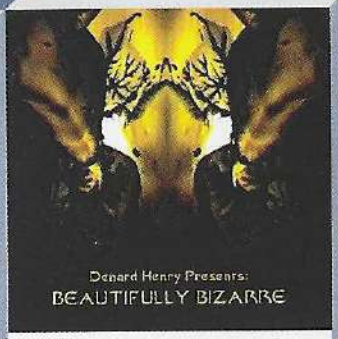
Pino Shamlou (Stir/Lo-Fi), a producer from Mainhatten (Frankfurt), produced three tech-house tracks by magic, from the Lake Clark Studios directly on Bitter Sweet Music. With a touch of drum&base sounds and groovy housebeats, the hips will definitely not standing motionless.
Who want's to feel some sun, positive energy or a smile on their faces on dreary and cold days like now will say: "Thanx Pino!"

SÉPARÉ RECORDINGS 01
Lauer & Parker: cluberotik ep
12"

The time is now - it's showtime.
The brandnew deephouselabel Séparé Recordings debues with a brilliant dry "cluberotic ep" 12" written and produced by the Hanau boozekids Lauer & Parker.
The tracks reflect their dirty, dusty industriecity image as it does the cosmopolitan world of "cluberotic". That means: minimal, accurate beats in combi- nation with horny vocals - absolutly HIT suspicious!!

KANZLERAMT 57
Family Lounge aka Anthony Rother: Kamakasi
(get pretty Baby)
12"

Those who expect dreamy Home-listening from "Family Lounge", could fall victim to conceptual conflicts of association. "Family Lounge" is analog Minimal-Techno, defined by Germany's Electro-figurehead Anthony Rother. All in all more humorous packaged than for example "Simulationszeitalter" or "Art is a division of Pain", with a spontaneous jam-session character and an eyetwinkling "Get pretty Baby" on the tongue, all tracks have a groovy 4/4-bar in common. The CD includes eleven, the appendant 12inch four Tracks. The analog beat-box rocks the house, Anthony's moving you and then: let's party...
Yeahh, get pretty Baby !



CIPHER RECORDS 07
Denard Henry: beautifully bizarre
12" / CD

Your mission...
Take the journey and listen to the sound track.
The 12" will give you a good overview to your sonic adventure, groovy, smooth with the right touch of exquisite electronic programming, the a-side is something for all the "dance floor players" that love to shake and bounce there way from the bar.
The b-side "late lounge sound" just right to get the nite started. The cd will give you the complete mind-mapping needed for your journey with all the right elements of [j. a. g.] "jazzy ambient groove" to keep you in the flow.
This is a complete package of sonic dialogue, one that all sonic warrior's should have in the-box.

GROW! 04 CD
Jeremiah: un dia soleado
CD

"Un dia soleado" finally the first Jeremiahs longplayer is coming out. The houseproducer, who knows the business for one decade and introduce parallel to his classical releases new co-operation between Jeremiahs Soul Brothers Calum Walker (aka Fresh & Low) and Losoul (aka Don Disco) In this Release. On the same time is coming out two new grow! 12"s with remixes from Freaks and Fresh & Low. (grow! 31 & 32)

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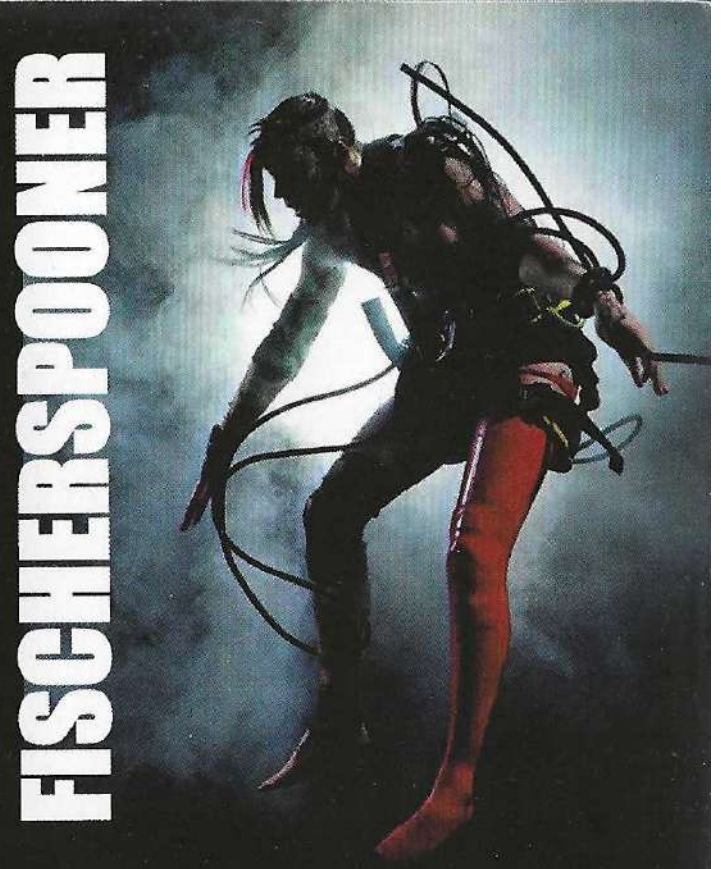
What exactly does FISCHERSPOONER stand for? Overload meets Casey Spooner, the co-founder of electro's art-pop outlaws, who kindly helps out.



Fraudulence
"We thought 'why would we put two months of work into a song and then perform it live? It won't sound as good, there's harmonies and layers in there.' After that it was like 'Fuck it - let's make this about lip synching.' Electronic music is basically a studio form, its not like its really necessary for us to fabricate the music. And people want to believe, it's uncanny. Other musicians say 'I heard the record and it sounds so much better live.' I'm like 'it's the same fucking record!' People honestly think I sing even though there are multiple parts, multiple harmonies, digitally edited."

Intensity
Describing Fischerspooner as a cult carries negative connotations, though the commitment shown by their devotees draws parallels with Numanoids and Smiths disciples. Many groups can claim dedicated indie publications, but few would expect to find those that edit them in the front row of every gig frantically collecting fake blood and parts of clothing to use as covermounts.

Sam Ash
"It's a place in Times Square where you can buy beats, breaks, vocals, basically everything you hear in electronic music, on specially compiled CDs. We're talking about the stuff Moby and Fatboy Slim use, the whole collective unconscious of dance music. It's like every genre you can imagine. All rights-free, on a CD, ready to go, from reggae to any form of house to Aboriginal Australian samples - the whole damn lot. There was one CD in there called 'Sounds Of India'. It was all samples from Bollywood - Indian pop. When I heard that music I was like 'I have to use this.'"

Co-Operation
Fischerspooner is an umbrella for a core-group of talents; Warren Fischer (Composer), Casey Spooner (Lyricist), Lizzy Yoder and Cindy Greene (Vocalists), Jordana Toback (Choreographer), Vanessa Walters, Mindi McAlister and Ariana Pistilli (Dancers), Jeff Francis (Coiffeur), Angela DiCarlo (Makeup), Jeremiah Clancy (Onstage Assistant) and Kent William Albin (Chief Information Officer). Auxiliary members include DJ John Selway. "It's been turbulent and traumatic and it's absolutely not necessary that people share the same viewpoint. The conflict comes from confusion and the confusion is what makes each project interesting."

Hype
During this press trip, the path of Casey Spooner has crossed, unwittingly but aptly, those of Adam Ant and Neil Tennant. He is so obviously a star it seems almost futile becoming one. Top Of The Pops is Fischerspooner's natural habitat. And pop will shit itself.

Electro
"Warren was frustrated with his [film] career. He was doing the TinTin 2001, just crappy kid's toys. He was like, 'I think my whole life will be me shooting crap commercials.' I said to him, 'you're a brilliant musician, lets make a track and shoot a video.' I was doing experimental theatre at the time and going out and seeing Derrick Carter and Dajae at the Red Box - this is about '92. I guess I was in the dance scene and Warren was in the rock scene. A song that had a huge influence on me was [Jaydee's] 'Plastic Dreams'. Warren hated it, the repetition of it, and he just went off and got into other music. It wasn't until he heard IF's 'Space Invaders Are Smoking Grass' that he said 'I think this should be our sound.' This was the fall of '98."

Revision
"I've been asked if what we are doing is political. I'm sure it is if I thought about it, but I'm not sure exactly how. It felt great to do [a show in] Starbucks. It totally disturbed an environment that has become such a natural part of our day. It was great to disturb that homogeneousness. Imagine it: you come in to grab a coffee and there's a guy in a monkey suit doing a striptease to electro music surrounded by backing singers wearing red vinyl panties. In a Star-fucking-bucks."

Slogan
'Sounds good, looks good, feels good'. Or 'I can't believe it's not electro'. Possibly.

Pretension
"This whole project is based on being artificial and pretending."

Oversights
"A lot of the best things that have happened to us have been problems. Gigolo have been really laid back. We control everything, it's a conceptual project over and above the music. Whatever we present them with, they're fine with it. For instance, we made 'Emerge' as a film and added the music later. People were annoyed by the number of edits in it but we refused to re-shoot it for MTV. If they won't play it we'll premiere it in art galleries - it'll be seen somehow. We're dealing with London, New York and Munich through the internet. We're totally indie - the accidents make it interesting. "

Observation
"On one hand it's about creating this artifice, this spectacle, no matter how or what it takes. I don't tell people what to do. I just want to ensure people are having a good time which makes for a good performance. People are watching to voyeur, to project themselves. If you hear my mike on, people honestly believe what they see and that I sing."

New York
"The city is just a bitch, there's no way around it, but the song is true ' if you can make it there you'll make it anywhere.' People are really hungry for culture, input, new ideas. In Chicago, my home town, I'd do a show and thirty people would show up, whereas in New York it'd be a hundred and thirty. New York for me has been dull, but its getting cooler. Guilliani's going to leave office, we're going to become popstars and New York will be come exciting again."

Exhibitionism
"It can go either way but it has to go one way or the other. We decided to go the other - if you have this opportunity to create music and have it played back why not use that technology to do something different? Because of my background in theatre and performance my mind ran wild with the possibilities. Moving set-pieces, all the devices of popular live entertainment plus new ideas that we could realise. We built upon that and brought in hair, make up, dancers, vocalists, all these different people that would come and work. I'm not trying to jerk anyone."

Rumour
"If there's anything you want to write, lie. In fact, the more you lie the better, this is about being exciting. It would be great to read a whole load of press cuttings that didn't resemble each other. The truth is boring. You may as well make it up."

'No. 1' by Fischerspooner is out now on International Deejay Gigolos.

WORDS> Nick Doherty

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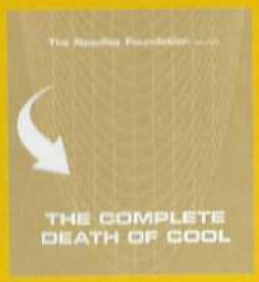

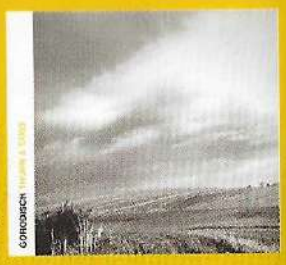

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Kieran Hebden occupies an enviable place in contemporary music. Comfortably straddling the avant-garde and the accessible with his output as a member of post-rockers Fridge and on his own as Four Tet, DJing all over Europe and remixing artists from His Name Is Alive to Two Banks Of Four, it certainly looks as though his moment in the sun has arrived as he performs in the baking heat of Barcelona's SONAR festival.

KIERAN HEBDEN

"I have been quite careful about it and I have really wanted that," he says when asked about the duality of his position within the electronic establishment. "I've spent a couple of years making sure I don't find myself pigeon-holed, either in some cheesy, corporate pop world or a horrendous, geeky experimental bracket. I don't really like the snobbishness of that scene and have never wanted to get wrapped up in that kind of narrow-mindedness. I've always embraced a wide variety of music and have never seen that there's anything wrong with, or odd about, making a post-rock record by day and then going out and playing hip-hop or UK garage when I DJ in a club. It's really important to keep things lively and have a sense of fun about what I do because I really enjoy it and you can push people a bit further like that too."

These myriad influences can be clearly heard throughout the artist's prolific recording career, from his earliest meanderings with Fridge to 'Pause', the latest Four Tet album on Domino Recordings. The free-jazz of Ornette Coleman collides with the Krautrock grooves of Neu!, R&B-style production trips over two-step rhythms and bucolic guitars, while Kieran himself quietly gets on with the job of making the music he loves. It's that simple - no categories, no boundaries, no worries. "It's amazing really. I have had this fairy tale life where I've just been able to do a lot of things I really want to do," he considers. "Fridge were a school band to begin with; myself, Adem Ilhan and Sam Jeffers met at comprehensive school in Putney, and us starting to release music at all came about from a chance meeting with someone in a record shop who put us in touch with Trevor Jackson from Output records. Then I began working as Four Tet more or less by accident because we couldn't get together as a band very often while we were at university. I was at college in Manchester and bought a computer and just started experimenting with my own music. And to be honest I never know what I'm going to be doing in three months' time, but I like that as it leaves you open to new opportunities."

Ironically, this apparently laissez-faire approach has led Kieran, still only in his mid-twenties, to formulate increasingly clear-cut ideas of just where he is heading. Signing a deal with Go Beat enabled Fridge to leave college and concentrate on making music full-time, culminating in 1999's stunning 'Eph', an album he variously describes as the record the band "always wanted to make," and their "prog-rock epic".

However, aside from a slot as Badly Drawn Boy's backing band on tour last year, most press cuttings concentrate on Kieran's solo work; from the smudgy, sax-strewn textures of his debut LP 'Dialogue' to the pastoral harmonies of his new offering. "I suppose I can see the reason behind that," he says "Fridge are quite studio-based and we've never been a traditional rock band. So the kind of big tours that bands like Mogwai do aren't really for us and that's where a band gets a lot of its recognition. But if you work on your own with a computer, using things like vocals and breakbeats, then people seem to be far more willing to tap into it at the moment. "It's a strange time for music. Still, I've always made a point of embracing the new without worrying whether it ends up all over magazines or the radio, so it doesn't bother me at all. I mean, 'Happiness', the next Fridge album which is due out my own label Text in October, has virtually no beats on it - it's full of chiming bells and things instead. Both projects are completely different entities and totally separate, yet they still feed off and fertilise one another."

"I've always embraced a wide variety of music and have never seen that there's anything wrong with, or odd about, making a post-rock record by day and then going out and playing hip-hop or UK garage when I DJ in a club."

But 'Pause' marks a brave step into uncharted territory, fusing zithers, plucked strings and the sound of leaves rustling in the wind with tough, uncompromising rhythm structures and jarring, yet deceptively simple studio techniques. In fact, "Glue Of The World" and "You Could Ruin My Day" conjure images of tranquillity gone awry; like dreaming the day away in a rural idyll, only to be pulled back to reality by the sound of police sirens rushing past. Gone is the mysticism of Sun Ra and the motorik throb of Can, replaced by a strange and contrary set of soothing pastoral vignettes, underpinned with a palpable sense of dystopian disquiet. "With 'Eph' and through 'Dialogue' I was hooked on free jazz and that whole blissed-out sound of people like Don Cherry," Kieran says. "But when I made 'Pause', I was listening to a lot of folk music. The thing I like most about electronic music though, be it hip-hop, techno or whatever, is repetition and the fact that there's something you can lock into. So I had the idea of making a record that brought those two styles together, because that was what I really wanted to hear but couldn't find anywhere - an album of urban folk songs."

'Pause' by Four Tet is out now on Domino.

WORDS> Dave Stelfox

CHARLIE HALL

Nineties production duo, the Drum Club, provided many a soundtrack for days of post-acid house hedonism. In the years since his split with Drum Clubber Lol Hammond, DJ, producer and label-runner CHARLIE HALL has been busy stoking the marketplace with top-notch tunes of pan-global origin.

Charlie Hall can't hide his feelings that things have gone a little bit, well, off course with dance music culture over recent years. "Hope I didn't sound like a bitter aulde fucker. Fings ain't what they used ter be!!" he jests via email, one week after chewing the fat with Overload in a West London boozer. But then he's right. Things aren't what they used to be. When the Drum Club joined the likes of Orbital, Underworld and the Aphex Twin on the legendary Midi Circus tour in 1993 (a project initiated by Hall and Hammond), the vibe that ran thick through parties and clubs of that era was a fresh, positive wave of energy, embroiling the emotions of a whole generation. "People were inspired by the whole story rather than now" he imparts. "Now it's a living for people and they don't do it to be 'in the scene', they do it to play the mortgage or pay the rent - which is fair enough, because you can't expect the scene to continue really inspiring people for ten, twelve years."

In '89 when the clubs were packed Monday through until Sunday every night, Charlie Hall found it relatively easy to slot in as a DJ in an under-staffed market, landing a residency at Soho's Wag club on his third gig. "I used to get a really hard time from all the local DJs round here" he recounts. "These guys from this record shop where used to slag me off so much cause I was 'posh Tarquin' getting into the DJing business, but I stuck it out..." Indeed, by 1990 he was becoming an integral player in the burgeoning dance scene, promoting groundbreaking nights on the London scene (notably the seminal Drum Club) and finding active involvement with notorious free party organisations such as Spiral Tribe and Sugarlump.

He met Lol Hammond at one of his parties called 'The Loft', subsequently forming a production partnership. Following their debut release, 'U Make Me Feel So Good' on Spiral Tribe's label, the duo quickly became one of dance music's hottest remixing outfits, reworking Jah Wobble, Psychick Warriors Of Gaia and even Killing Joke and going on to produce two albums before the pair parted company in 1994. "Yeah, we kind of fell out, but that was just an ego thing" he explains. "We got dropped by Big Life because the music wasn't really good enough and then I wanted to do another album but we'd lost our income - which was fine because I was DJing. Lol formed another band with Nina from Sabrettes and I got pissed off that he was doing another band so we split the band up. We both lost our senses of humour for a while, but I DJ'd at his club Funkt last month and I had a really good time."

As with formative DJing colleagues such as Steve Bicknell and Andy Weatherall, he's seen plenty of change in terms of "the psychology of the philosophy". "Don't forget that the same time the club thing was developing there are so many other things" he comments, "Spiral Tribe, the Megadog thing... There were lots of different stands for people who had just found electronic music that could provide a good springboard for their talents or their activities. The Spirals made their music uncompromising but also it was their politics that was the strong thing." Harking back to the dawn of rave, he's the first to acknowledge how Ecstasy was a fundamental catalyst in the explosion that followed and how major cultural movements are often underpinned by huge, unpredictable developments. Charlie: "I'm sure something will come from this, lots of things, but I'm sure there'll be some other explosion of optimism, another scene. It's usually coupled with a drug. I think the new scene will happen when someone figures out another way of getting out of it."

Unsurprisingly, changing times have seen Charlie Hall's enthusiasm for club culture fade. "Since I've become a dad I've got something else to do that keeps me awake at night" he smiles. Yet a large part of his disillusionment appears to lie in the focus shift from social interaction to star attraction. "The essential thing about a club is that it's a 'club' - it's a group of people who club together to have a particular experience" he theorises. "It's where people can meet and have a laugh or exchange music and can find some quiet corner to discuss shit that relates to their lives or their particular love of music, which is very healthy. Now that it is much more DJ orientated people will go along to see Dave Clarke or whoever. I think that when DJs became bigger than the club, DJs then became mercenaries and would DJ because the promoter would say 'Dave Clarke equals 2000 people through the door', and then you'd get people who wouldn't really care about the club or wouldn't really care about the music - they'd just care about the DJ because they were equal to a certain amount of people, and personally I don't think that equals a great thing because often that DJ isn't on form. The onus is put on the DJ to provide the entire entertainment."

"I'm sure something will come from this, lots of things, but I'm sure there'll be some other explosion of optimism, another scene. It's usually coupled with a drug. I think the new scene will happen when someone figures out another way of getting out of it."

Having DJed extensively worldwide, serving residencies in France and also at Liverpool's long-running techno night Voodoo, he finds little inspiration in today's top vinyl spinners who rigidly stick to one style. "My favourite DJ in the world is Derrick May" he comments. "In the course of his set he'll play house and techno, he'll play proper Detroit techno and he'll play a bit of kind Marco Carola, some really looping stuff, he'll play a wide range of stuff and some very esoteric music, music that freaks people out. I can't really be inspired to dance for a whole night to the same type of music. It's just not fun."

In more recent years, alongside less-frequent DJing forays Charlie Hall has been co-running London-based Victoria Music, a stable housing a spread of labels that extends far beyond the remit of house and techno: his own Pro-Jex, DJ Rush's Kne Deep, house labels Nepenta and Fandango, Japanese concerns U7, Housedust and Subvoice, and not forgetting Rob Jarvis's controversial Killa Bite. There's a new title on the cards for deeper, melodic techno called Inform, and also Rodeo Meat - for what he loosely describes as 'sleazy loungecore'. Having spent years running the ever-diverse MC Projects, when the label "mutated into Pro-Jex" Charlie chose to hone its output towards a more defined style - a direction influenced by his long-standing love of Chicago house and techno. "With Pro-Jex, even though every EP is not ghetto techno or jackin' techno, it'll be trying to keep that sort of idea," he explains. "I can always dance to Chicago music whatever mood I'm in - whether I'm completely sober, straight, tripping or anything. It gets the arse going and I love that. I think it's very, very important."

Naturally then, Charlie Hall seized the opportunity to invite DJ Rush, one of Chicago's most hotly vaunted artists, into the Victoria encampment. "I used to do a lot of DJing in Spain," he recounts. "One Friday afternoon when I was in the office a phone call came through that said Luke Slater has pulled out of doing a gig, can you come and be Luke Slater - it involves you getting on a plane in two hours? So I made it to the airport and met Rush who was standing in for Juan Atkins. It was a great gig, really good, and he came up to me and said, 'Luke I didn't realise you played so much Chicago shit' and I was like 'Juan, I didn't realise you played so much banging shit'. We were at this beautiful outdoor party and I just sort of reeled him in." Within a month Rush had supplied the DAT for the third Pro-Jex release and plans were soon afoot for his own Kne Deep imprint among the ranks.

His relationship with Rush was augmented last year when the debut album from the Chicago don was released on Pro-Jex, but he harbours a clear desire to put out new material by other Dance Mania ghetto heroes, such as DJ Funk and Deeon. "I'm desperate to get that fucking layabout making some music," he says of Funk. "He released one EP for us and it was an absolute killer, everybody loved it. Deeon is truly ghetto - he won't get it together and doesn't fucking care."

His label involvements of recent years have also provided worldwide exposure for Japanese artists such as DJs Zank and Shufflemaster, yet he's quick to name-check home grown talent from the UK who he's eager to work with on future releases - Brighton's Cristian Vogel (who already released an EP on Pro-Jex under the name of Julia Decay), Noodles mentalist Si Begg, the ever-inventive Luke Slater and also newcomer Mark Hawkins. Having releases his own tracks on MC Projects (as Phlex), on Svek as (Charlie H), and on Pro-Jex (under his own name - most recently with his 'Our Kid EP', dedicated to Hall Junior), he talks of plans to further his own recording schedule, as and when time permits. "I'll get back to doing stuff at some point - stuff I am really happy with," he concludes. "It requires me to have a studio in my flat and occasionally come up with something I really love. I'll go for a few days in the studio and start from scratch and it's not enough."

So, is Charlie Hall bitter? Nah. And as the lumbering beast of commercial club culture further undermines the fabric of the original 'dance' ethos, you can rest assured that he'll continue playing his part in perverting the course of mainstream music monotony.

VICTORIA MUSIC ALL-TIME TOP ...ER, THIRTEEN

(in chronological order only)
DRUM CLUB 'Bug' (MC Projects)
SOLITARIA 'Medusa' (MC Projects)
SUBVOICE 'Vampirella' (Subvoice)
FLARE 'Re-Grip' (Sublime)
V/A '11 Phases' (Sublime)
DJ RUSH 'Spitball' (Pro-Jex)
MIKE WADE 'Guidelines' (Kne' Deep)
DJ SHUFFLEMASTER 'Extended Playtime' (Subvoice)
GRAVITON 'Backstabbing' (Cloak & Dagger)
DJ K-ALEXI 'From The Front (Rmxs)' (Nepenta)
CO-FUSION 'Remix EPs (x3)' (Reel Musiq)
DJ RUSH 'Look And See' (Pro-Jex)
DJ FUNK 'Ghetto Tek 2000' (Pro-Jex)

CHARLIE HALL'S ALL-TIME TOP 10

1) THE HOLY GHOST 'The Word'
2) UR 'The Vision EP'
3) LFO 'LFO'
4) FRANKIE KNUCKLES 'Your Love'
5) DRUM CLUB 'U Make me feel so good'
6) SABRES OF PARADISE 'United'
7) FUSE 'Substance Abuse'
8) AFRICAN BUSINESS 'In Zaire'
9) GERALD MITCHELL 'Afro Germanic'
10) KRAFTWERK 'Numbers /Computer World'

Visit www.overloadmedia.co.uk for the full Overload interview with Charlie Hall, or for further info about Victoria Music visit www.victoria-music.com.

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adult.

Can't take any more faceless techno? Looking for something a little more grown up? Detroit's ADULT. duo are breathing new life into electronic music, says Tom Magic Feet.

In case you hadn't noticed, electronic music is changing. The credo of faceless techno is on its last legs. DJ music that only really makes sense in a club just won't cut it any more. It's been done to death, a million times over. Instead of making endless tiny components for an ever-expanding machine, the challenge now is to stand apart from the crowd, with your own sound and your own vision. The music that really matters now has something else to offer, something to engage the mind as well as the feet. The music that matters now goes beyond the dance.

Some are pushing resolutely forwards, trying to define what it means to be an electronic artist - look at Jeff Mills, with his soundtracks and concept albums, for example. But still others are looking backwards, rediscovering the past to create a new future, remembering what it was that made them fall in love with music in the first place. Where once pop and performance were dirty words, pricks for techno to kick against, now bands like Miss Kittin & The Hacker, Chicks On Speed and Fischerspooner, and producers like Gerhard Potuznik, Terrence Fixmer and Ed DMX - to name but a few - are reclaiming them for the future.

But if one band are leading the charge, it's ADULT., the Detroit husband and wife team of Adam Lee Miller and Nicola Kuperus. Earlier this year, they released 'Resuscitation', a CD compiling mostly new mixes of tracks from all four of the ADULT. EPs to date. The result is the most exciting album in ages. 'Resuscitation' is electronic, but it's as much about pop music as it as about techno and electro. Its tracks have pop structures: intros, melodies, lyrics and hooks. Its frequent abrasiveness and dislocated, haughty, half-spoken vocals hark back to punk, while its deceptively simplistic, stiff electro music speaks of '80s new wave and Kraftwerk. Its songs deal with the contemporary realities of life: technology, consumerism, communication, entertainment, environment. In short, it's retro - there, I said it - but thoroughly modern too. And it rocks.

That ADULT. are not Afraid To Rock is something Adam and Nicola are particularly proud of. For example, the fact that some of the crowd at their recent New York gig were slam-dancing is a source of great pleasure to them both. "Nicola actually had to tell the crowd to calm down, and that's great!" enthuses Adam. "That's just the point we're trying to get at. You know, Nicola had a lesbian flash her tits at her [Nicola collapses in laughter] - it's exciting that people are getting excited. We've played a ton of shows and we know what songs work now. We always play really adrenaline-laced songs, we spend a lot of time practising, getting the songs to blend together in a real exciting way. It still has elements of improv - we can make things shorter, faster, speed 'em up, slow 'em down." "It's like going to see a band play," Nicola interjects, her cracked voice testifying to a sore throat. "Yeah," continues Adam, "I mean, we've tried this thing in the past where we play a couple of slow songs and it just doesn't work - you know, if you're out late you need a lot of uptempo stuff to keep you awake! [laughs] And with us both being majorly into a lot of punk rock in our teen years, there' s a lot of that energy in it, which is obviously coming across if people are slamdancing!"

Both of them are painfully aware of the live shortcomings of so much electronic music. "I think people like shows," says Nicola. "I get really excited when a good live band comes to Detroit because they're so few and far between. There's been a lot of laptop bands that have come through and it's OK, but." "It's not OK!" splutters Adam, laughing. "It sucks! It's like, two guys sitting - sitting! - behind a computer. Like, what have we come to? It's kind of the next stage after the noise bands, but at least there you got to watch people hit stuff! It reminds me of what Gene Simmonds said about why they started Kiss: all four of those guys were friends and they kept wanting to go see bands - like a band would come through and they'd be so excited beforehand, then they'd go and they'd be disappointed, so they said 'Let's start a band that'll be exciting'. We've approached our live shows like that since day one, and we keep getting closer and closer to our goal. It would be great in the future if we could get some kind of production budget and put on the show we've always envisioned."

Adam and Nicola met in an art gallery. He paints, she's a photographer (although interestingly they've never worked together on anything other than music). But their work doesn't exist seperately from their music; instead, it courses through every beat of every track. On an immediate level, for example, their work forms the basis of the band's visual identity: Nicola's photographs adorn the record sleeves whilst Adam is responsible for clean, sharp typefaces used on all the Ersatz Audio releases. Not forgetting their smart, minimalist and ever-so-slightly retro dress sense.

Yet it goes deeper than that. Nicola: "His paintings are very clean and minimal, with a lot of ideas involved in them and there's always a concept that is very minimal. My photography, I think, always has an awkward, uncomfortable feeling behind it, and I think that also applies with the music - it's not like, loose and bubbly." Adam: "She usually has her photographs sketched out before the make up artist gets set. My painting are hard edge, so everything has to be planned and taped off, it's not like just pushing paint around - everything is very planned and structured."

As a result, ADULT. records are frequently conceived before a note is played and audibly betray the detached, observational nature of the artist. 'Minors At Nite', for example, taken from the 'Nausea' EP, directly resulted from one of Adam's paintings of the same name. "I had done a series of paintings about what juveniles do for entertainment," he explains, or at least, attempts to. "It's hard to explain, but it had all these references like playing records and video games. There was another called 'Teenage Freedom', which had a bicycle and a logo from a popular movie house in America, and the background was a pattern of cigarette butts. It wasn't nostalgia, it was sympathetic to being young in America. You know, you get on your bike and you go to the movies and you smoke cigarettes with your friends."

"I'm glad that it takes a lot of adjectives to describe our music. But we're a little bored with the whole 'robo' thing."

In the same way, the track 'Nausea' itself arose from the idea of a series of photographs about human phobias. "We wrote down tons of ideas based around touching things with latex gloves," recalls Nicola, "Like when you pump that gas you think of how many people have touched that gas pump before you and all that. So that's where the concept came from." "That we're both crazy!" Adam interrupts, laughing. "We both don't like to touch things in public," Nicola continues. "The concept definitely came before the music on that one, we kinda created the songs around that concept." "Electronic music is often catergorised as sterile and not human, too," adds Adam, "so I think it's an abstract reference to that whole anti-electronic crowd."

ADULT. began two or three years ago, while Adam was one half of Le Car with Ian Cinch-Jones. On the side, he recorded solo as Artificial Material, but as Nicola began to become more and more involved and the music began to change as a result, a new name seemed to be in order. After a brief excursion as Plasma Co. for Cologne's Electrecord label, the first ADULT. release was 1988's 'Dispassionate Furniture' EP - a track "dedicated to the estranged relationships that develop between furniture and their masters". Adam describes the band's formation as "a natural evolution" and claims that there was never any real plan. "One thing I have always tried to do with the label, from the very beginning is, I'm always trying to watch for the trends and I'm trying to avoid them. In '95 when the label [Ersatz Audio] started, it kind of had an idea [the dictionary defines Ersatz as 'serving as a substitute; synthetic; artificial'] and then when that blew up with Autechre and all that, that's when I started moving into more of an electro sound in '96, which wasn't popular then. Then the electro sound blew up and that's when Le Car started doing synth-pop references, and then that kinda blew up. So that's when Nicola and I started working together. If we had any concept for ADULT. it was just what's not being done and we started to use more industrial references and doing vocals and whatnot. That seems to be getting more popular now, but I don't think we will stop that. [laughs]"

Yet the name also gives away another aspect of the music. Ostensibly inspired by the cover of Soft Cell's 'Non Stop Erotic Cabaret' LP, which pictures Marc Almond and Dave Ball in front of an adult bookshop, Adam admits that calling the band ADULT. was a reflection of their ages, too: "We knew that the music would be more serious. When you've played a handful of seventeen-year-old candy raves, you start to want to distinguish yourself apart from that audience."

'Resuscitation' has already been out for a couple of months, so for once I find myself in the rare position of interviewing a band after a release instead of beforehand. The album received, it is fair to say, mixed reviews. So what did they think of the critical reaction? Adam: "It seems like the main thing the magazines are saying is. well, they always do this string of adjectives, like." Nicola butts in, laughing: "Hot new robot music!" "Exactly," Adam continues. "Robo-pop-electro-funk-sexy-machine music. Which is fine - I'm glad that it takes a lot of adjectives to describe our music. But we're a little bored with the whole 'robo' thing. One thing we love about releasing records is getting feedback and seeing what the general consensus is, and that's what keeps us going, the reactionary qualities. So now we're really ready - of course it's going to be a long time before we get in the studio again - but when we start writing our next album, it's going to be a lot dirtier and. a lot less 'robo'! [laughs]"

But whilst no new ADULT. recordings may be planned for the time being, the last year or so has seen a veritable flood of ADULT. remixes. K-Rock, Fischerspooner and Tuxedomoon are just three of the artists to receive the ADULT. treatment recently, while mixes for GD Luxxe (aka Gerhard Potuznik), Phoenicia and Jackass & Mule are all due for release in the coming months. In addition, the pair are currently working on a remix of Detroit proto-techno classic 'Sharevari' by A Number Of Names. "They're fun," says Nicola, "but shit, they take a lot of time, you know? You spend all this time reworking somebody else's songs and it takes away your time to make your own. But you learn a lot of things doing it."

Adam picks up the thread: "You get to use elements you've never used. Like, 'I would never write a keyboard line like that, but it works'. I think it helps to expand your abilities, because you have to deal with a lot of elements you never normally have to deal with. We're definitely slowing down now, though - we've done sixteen remixes now, I think, which is quite funny when you think that ADULT. has written a total of like, twenty songs."

And what about this new movement in electronic music? How do ADULT. feel about being categorised as part of a new resurgence in electronic pop music? Adam adopts a realistic approach to it all. "I think nowadays that there's so much music out there that you have to have your bigger categories. Yeah, it sucks, but I think it's just a fact of life, like death and bills - it just has to happen. Or rather, it just will happen, no matter what you do. In some ways, it might help: I mean, if you look at techno, techno got started because of Virgin putting out the 'Techno!' compilation. Once you have a movement, then all the people are like 'Look, we've got something'. It's funny, I think about that and then I think about new wave. I bet there were so many bands that hated being called new wave and being lumped into that. Every artist always says 'Oh, I'm not that genre'."

So the most exciting band around right now are a married couple who don't like to touch things in public and who have just twenty songs of art-inspired-robo-electro-punk-new wave-retro-pop to their name. You couldn't make it up.

'Resuscitation' is out now on Ersatz Audio.
For further info visit www.ersatzaudio.com

WORDS> Tom Magic Feet

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sónar 2001

Forget dairy produce-dominated Ibiza, and the industry schmoozathon that is Miami - every June, Barcelona's SONAR festival extends a warm Mediterranean welcome to techno tourists across the globe. Overload's Nick Craddock was there to get the low-down, and what a chore it was.

One of the first things to become apparent upon attending Sonar is that it is unlike any festival you will find in the UK. Our traditional pastime here of parading out to the countryside to get mashed, often in the rain, doesn't quite operate on the same level as Barcelona's contribution to the world festival scene. 2001 marked the 8th consecutive year that Sonar opened it's gates to visitors from far and wide for three days and three nights. It's lure proves irresistible to repeat visitors, and it's line-up is persuasive enough to make it a priority to any potential convert in the know. Since it's conception in 1994, Sonar has successfully established itself as a centre for electronics in it's application to art and music, and it continues to provide an environment where both industry types and punters alike can seek insight into artistic trends and the technologies that make them possible.

Proceedings commenced this year on Thursday 14th of June, with the opening of the festival at Midday. Sonar's daytime home is split between the city's Centre of Contemporary Culture (CCCB), and the adjacent MACBA (Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona), with each impressively transformed to comprise four separate areas for performance, along with an interactive area (Sonarmatica); which highlights the multi-media and digital art emerging from a particular city (this year it's gaze was cast on London). In addition to this, there also exists a record fair, technology fair, cinema (Sonarcinema), professional area, and exhibition space for more 'traditional' contemporary art works. The hub of the CCCB is the 'Sonar Village' - an outdoor courtyard with a large stage, several bars and a restaurant. This space manages to effectively serve as a venue for enjoying the music on offer, as well as being equally great for sitting around and getting pissed up in the sun. The combination of both of these activities can produce a result close to absolute bliss. Artists to appear on the stage here included Jazzanova (as part of a full Compost Records showcase), DJ Vadim (and the Russian Percussion), and Andy Votel, but emphasis must be placed on the vast number of DJs and performers who played that are practically unheard of to all but the most worldly music fan.

The selection of artists to appear at the festival manages to cover a huge breadth of styles and origins - care is taken to ensure that it's performers are picked from the international stage in it's widest context. So, whilst big names like Masters At Work, Frankie Knuckles, Jeff Mills, and Carl Cox headline the evening's itinerary, you're just as likely to witness performances and DJ sets from home grown talent in addition to some lesser known acts from across the globe.

Around the corner from the Sonar Village is the 'Sonarlab' - a relatively small marquee that was this year graced by such folks as John Peel and Dave Tarrida. The former took to the decks in mid-afternoon to entertain the masses with his stunning programming which took in 'Love Will Tear Us Apart', 'You'll Never Walk Alone' (Songs From The Cop version), 'Teenage Kicks', and a happy hardcore rendition of Mariah Carey's 'Without You'. This was met with suitably rapturous crowd reaction, and big smiles all round. Meanwhile, Dave Tarrida was asked by Tresor to display their credentials, and what an arsenal he had to work with. I doubt it occurred to the crowd that it was tea-time when Tarrida let rip - you wouldn't have guessed anyway, as he dropped tune after tune of label classics and turned the sometime seated area into a seemingly late night sweatbox.

Elsewhere, at the MACBA - an area traditionally reserved for the most experimental strains of music, Mille Plateau held their label showcase in church-like surroundings. Sutekh dished up vinyl-based helpings of all things pop and click, and fellow label mates Vladislav Delay, Kid 606, SND and Curd Duca performed live. Those who had successfully conquered the long queue to bear witness had to contend with some stifling heat, which perhaps didn't create the best environment for the sometimes demanding music... or maybe I'm just a pasty Brit who isn't used to hot weather.

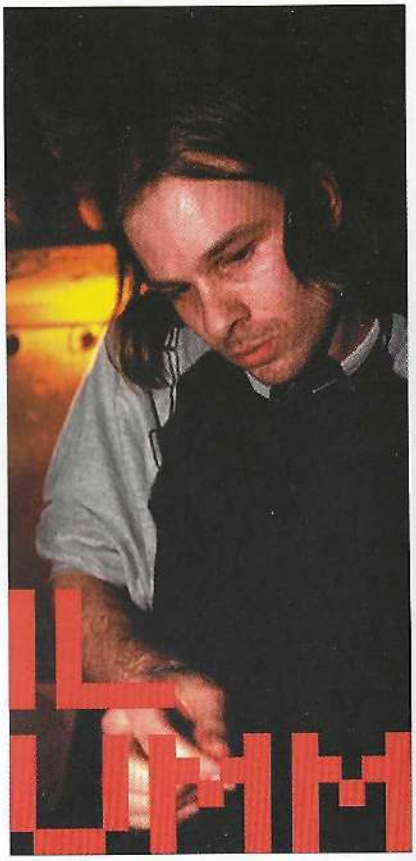
With daytime events finishing around 9pm, there were only a few hours until things kicked off a few miles out of town at the gargantuan 'Montjuic 2' venue, divided into three spaces - 'Sonarclub', 'Sonarpark', and 'Sonarpub' (can you spot a theme yet?). With Sonar's reputation growing steadily with each passing year, the number of visitors has increased proportionately - hence this year's decision to move from the 'Pavello Del Mar'; a leisure centre a few miles down the coast, with the massive advantage of having a terrace overlooking the sea. It would be fair to say that this aspect was missed from Sonar 2001, regardless of it's own considerable merit.

Personal preference went to the impressively lit outdoor stage (Sonarpub) - at it's best on the Friday. You know you've got it good when you can see Isolee, Twerk, Luomo, DJ Jasper (Cytrax), G-Man, and Steve Rachmad play consecutively. All excelled, with the Force Inc. artists in particular showcasing some luscious electronic techno that avoided ever resorting to tired recycled loopery. Top marks especially go to Jasper, who would have taken the roof off were it not outdoors, and Steve Rachmad, who slammed three decks until well after the sun had come up.

Sonar's final night (Saturday) is traditionally a biggie. With Jori Hulkkonen, The Youngsters, Richie Hawtin, Phuture 303, Jeff Mills, UMEK, and local man Angel Molina playing this year, that tradition was continued, with each act pushing the vast crowds towards the brink of total hard techno meltdown. A predictable highlight was Jeff Mills' set - with the Purpose Maker throwing it down very tightly, encompassing breathtaking 909 work that put other drum machine wielders to shame. The question of how to follow Mills must have been deliberated over by UMEK, who eventually decided that the best approach would be to conduct his set across four turntables (still with the standard two hands). He pulled it off too by all accounts, but by then the kickdrums had become too much. Time to retire outside for rest and drinks, and the happy discovery that Matthew Herbert was to play the closing set of the festival. Billed as 'DJ Mistakes', Ol' Herb did himself proud, keeping asses shaking until after 9am with his inspired / inspiring selection of music. Matthew's ability to craft perfection within imperfection was exhilarating - no mean feat after three days and nights of revelry!

Whilst it is relatively simple to outline the features and benefits of such a festival, it is perhaps more difficult to pin down the essence of Sonar. Certainly, those who attend will endeavour to explain to friends at home exactly why they had such a good time. A combination of location, laid back Spanish / Catalan vibe, and the music itself all play a large part, but even then it's difficult to do Sonar justice. Perhaps the only way to truly get it is to visit in person and relinquish yourself to the Sonarbug.... See you there next year?

Fresh from messing with MTV's submissive millions, techno radical and New York-based Scot, NEIL LANDSTRUMM returns with a killer new album and plans to make inroads into the heart of hip hop's-ville. Bring on the bass...



NEIL LANDSTRUMM

Computer-dominated society has delivered a whole new league of artists driven ever-onwards by increasing power to process, manipulate, enhance, degrade. Neil Landstrumm is one such individual. An ardent supporter of the computer revolution and the creativity it permits, he posesses little time for boredom or triviality and, despite his absence from the music market since 1998, remains one of those characters that you know has been busy behind the scenes with some serious experimenting, some path-finding to fend off encroaching monotony. "There's no point in saying something unless you've got something to say" he replies, in answer to his apparent musical hiatus over the past three years. As his back-catalogue of music from the late nineties testifies, Landstrumm's ears live too far in to the future for him to release incarnations of his former self. "That would be a waste of time" he deadpans.

His years spent living in Edinburgh during the early nineties saw his musical breeding subject not only to the pull of acid house and the early rave scene but also a seminal clubbing community in the area within which he found a firm foothold for his music productions. "It was a mixture of creative people," he recounts. "We had a few of probably the best clubs in Britain or even Europe. We had Pure in Edinburgh and Wave, and Sativa later on which spawned the record label. These clubs were instrumental because they brought in a lot of the pioneers of the music like e.g. Fuse, Derrick May, LFO - all the Americans. Sativa brought in a lot of the Europeans like Hell, Dave Clarke, Cristian [Vogel]... Tobias Schmidt lived there, me, Dave Tarrida, and there was a real melting pot of talent and equipment. We built our own scene and our own way to distribute the music."

Post rave, his inspiration shifted to the sound of Chicago, with the recordings of Cajmere, Daniel Bell, Armani and Traxx Records imbuing his music with a framework of harsh jacking beats and bleeps - a stark contrast to the mainly acid techno coming from the rest of Europe. Rapidly gaining reputation for enormous-sounding live performances, Neil Landstrumm released his debut album 'Brown By August' - a gritty blend of UK and US influences - on Peacefrog in 1995. A further two album releases with Tresor, 'Understanding Disinformation' (1996) and 'Bedrooms & Cities' (1998), saw him take stock once more of his earlier European influences, fusing brutal bass with razor-sharp percussion and a hint of the hardcore ethos to create a hard-hitting hybrid of atomic two-step and jarring, muscular techno. When Landstrumm left Edinburgh in '97 for New York, his relocation opened him up to new influences and ideas, causing notable repercussions on his musical output, such as a distinct hip hop flavouring to his last album, 1988's 'Pro Audio'. Dwelling in the heart of the TV screen-keen city, he further embraced cheapening computer technology, turning his hand to the world of computer animation and finding work both within advertising and the great American daydream, MTV. With copious audio and visual projects now in the pipeline, it seems Neil Landstrumm has finally found a schedule to suit his ever-evolving mindset.

For the fuller tonal picture one need only glimpse at the music appearing on his Scandinavia imprint since its birth in 1996. Although he admits the label is characterised by a definite sound, like early Djax-Up-Beats material every release takes a distinctly different angle. "I've never put out a record for the sake of putting them out," he asserts. "The label has veered towards more experimental breakbeats, bass-heavy, noisy, bleepy stuff, quite sonic. It's quite 'love it or hate it' and it's definitely not pigeonholed. There's hip hop, there's trash breaks, techno stuff - it jumps around." Although destined in the global marketplace to be, as he puts it, "an experimental thing that plods along", Scandinavia is indicative of his need to break down perceived notions of music styles. Alongside Cristian Vogel and Landstrumm's UK contemporaries, his music is far removed from the currently popular loop-based techno format, a style he describes as 'industrial trance'. "I've tried to readjust what I think of techno," he professes. "To me techno got very stale and it bothered me for a while, enough for me to get sick of it and not wanting to do it anymore. I always listened to old records and thought 'this was fucking wicked when it came out.' And then you hear new stuff and it's so much crap. Scandinavia started as a techno thing, but the music my ears pricked up to was always so mad, like e.g. Bill Youngman's stuff, or the new Shit And Cheap stuff [him & Brighton's Mat Consume]. "It was deliberately trying to be as different as possible, because I think that's what early techno was, it was deliberately trying to come up with something that was abstract. Now it's too easy to settle for something that sounds like something else. It's not killing the music, but it's definitely making it tedious."

It's no surprise that his unorthodox sound style often results from unconventional working practices. Operating in a studio he likens to a "total pigpen" ("broken machines, old cables... I don't have any clean or surgical techniques") Landstrumm is one of few producers to use bitrate decimation in his music - a computer process that degrades the sound. So, what does he want to achieve through such rebellious processing techniques? "Just dirtying things up" he explains, "making them less nice and sugary and clean, breaking them down to something that is harder, more abrasive - which is not to everyone's taste. I haven't done that for the new album though, it's cleaner, a bit more synthy."

His penchant for computer technology has been apparent for years, using it as powerful, affordable and adaptable tool set for both sound and visual manipulation. "I just love that you can store things and come back to them two years later and it's exactly the same" he enthuses. "You can work on music, graphics or whatever and come back to it and it's exactly the same since the day you left it. It just puts the power of what was a very expensive studio ten years ago in your bedroom, and that's where it's at. Now you can emulate and simulate. While ten years ago it was an impossible task to get all the equipment you now can download it in half an hour." He also acknowledges computers for permitting greater communication, collaboration and dissemination, claiming to be better in touch with people across the world than when he lived in the UK. "Things like Napster, which is basically a jukebox to the world, we never had that." he continues. "You still need to know what it is to go find it, but you have immediately access to it. I think there is going to be a whole fusion and infusion of music to create a new sort of sound." Bundles of files for his MTV projects were delivered over the net from Brighton based colleagues Mat Consume and Tobias Schmidt. "I think it's going to be a lot easier to work with somebody who lives on the other side of the world. I think the Internet is going to provide the people with a vast resource of music. You are not restricted by your friends who listen to a certain type of music, you can listen to anything you want. That also means that people will have to think more for themselves, which I'm not sure people do anymore."

Neil Landstrumm certainly found an interesting test pad for his ultra-mutant visual work. His series of short animation projects for MTV ("a natural place, however commercial it may be") are slippery and colourful robotic simulations stitched together with experimental mini-soundtracks, designed to lurk in between the glossy music videos and info-tainment scraps. "I've always been interested in how sound and vision come together and desktop computers were getting powerful enough to do your animations and 3D modelling and basically do special effects" he explains. "So I thought why not branch in television, advertising and pop videos and somehow combine it with the music. Now I'm doing various art-based projects with Jeremy Blake."

Once drummer for a couple of "bad sort of 'Manchester' bands", he's long been prone to creative collaboration. "Otherwise it's just like having a wank all the time" he suggests. "I think if you get bands together where you have people concentrate on different things - have one person concentrate on the bass, one on production, one on drums... Me and Toby [Tobias Schmidt] work together quite a lot. We did the Sugar Experimentation Station stuff, and that was probably one of the best successes on Scandinavia, and I think we'll develop it more." The charmingly entitled 'Shit & Cheap' is "another important project" - bass-heavy beats and broken noise-scapes built on a Brighton / Brooklyn axis by Landstrumm and Trash Records boss Mat Consume. By contrast, 1998's 'Pro Audio' LP diffused a more accessible slant in to the stew, drawing inspiration from the deep beats and dynamic production of hip hop. "The production is huge. Some of the music is really crap, but you can't fault the production", says Neil, divulging his plans to start a hip hop label later this year. "It's going to be very techno-sounding hip hop. It takes elements from techno and puts it into mainstream hip hop. I'm not going for the aggressive style, it's more going to be like Tribe Called Quest, Q-Tip, a bit more intelligent." It's a project he also intends to take beyond the studio. "Because it's slower you've got much more space for a groove, something to build" he explains. "What I want to do with hip hop is perform live, take all the gear out, build it up and up. At hip hop gigs it's always a DAT with a guy shouting, talking. If you had it going up like a techno set you could build a real atmosphere." Enlisting the likes of Si Begg, Tobias Schmidt, Mat Consume and a couple of scratch DJs from Scotland among others, he proposes completion of a demo over the summer. "It's going to require totally different distributors, totally different places to play," he concludes. "I don't really want it to particularly cross over between techno. It has to be its own thing, and marketed and directed that way. Otherwise it's just a waste of time."

"Now it's too easy to settle for something that sounds like something else. It's not killing the music, but it's definitely making it tedious."

To the new long-player... 'She Took A Bullet Meant For Me' is a meticulously sculpted sub-bass soundclash - more eclectic than previous Landstrumm albums, welding frazzled hip hop, trash techno, spazzed-out house and wild electro leanings in to a fuzzy digital swamp. The title brings in his predilection for the tragic, dramatic feel of New Wave and New Romanticism, yet the words come from a sample used on a couple of the tracks - words with a disturbing underlying meaning. "It's a sample of a television broadcast which said 'She took a bullet meant for me'" he explains. "There was a horrible incident in Brazil where some nutter gunmen took a bus hostage. He had a woman he took hostage. I had these photographs of him through the bus windows, with the gun in her mouth. He made her write on the window with her lipstick. You couldn't create something like that; that was reality. I've always been interested in dark things like that. Eventually she got shot and it was really horrible." So, was it the potency of the image that impacted on the music making? "It doesn't work like that" he replies. "The music came first and I had a definite way the music was going. And then the way the sample built into it... once you listen to it you'll see that. The image just ties it together."

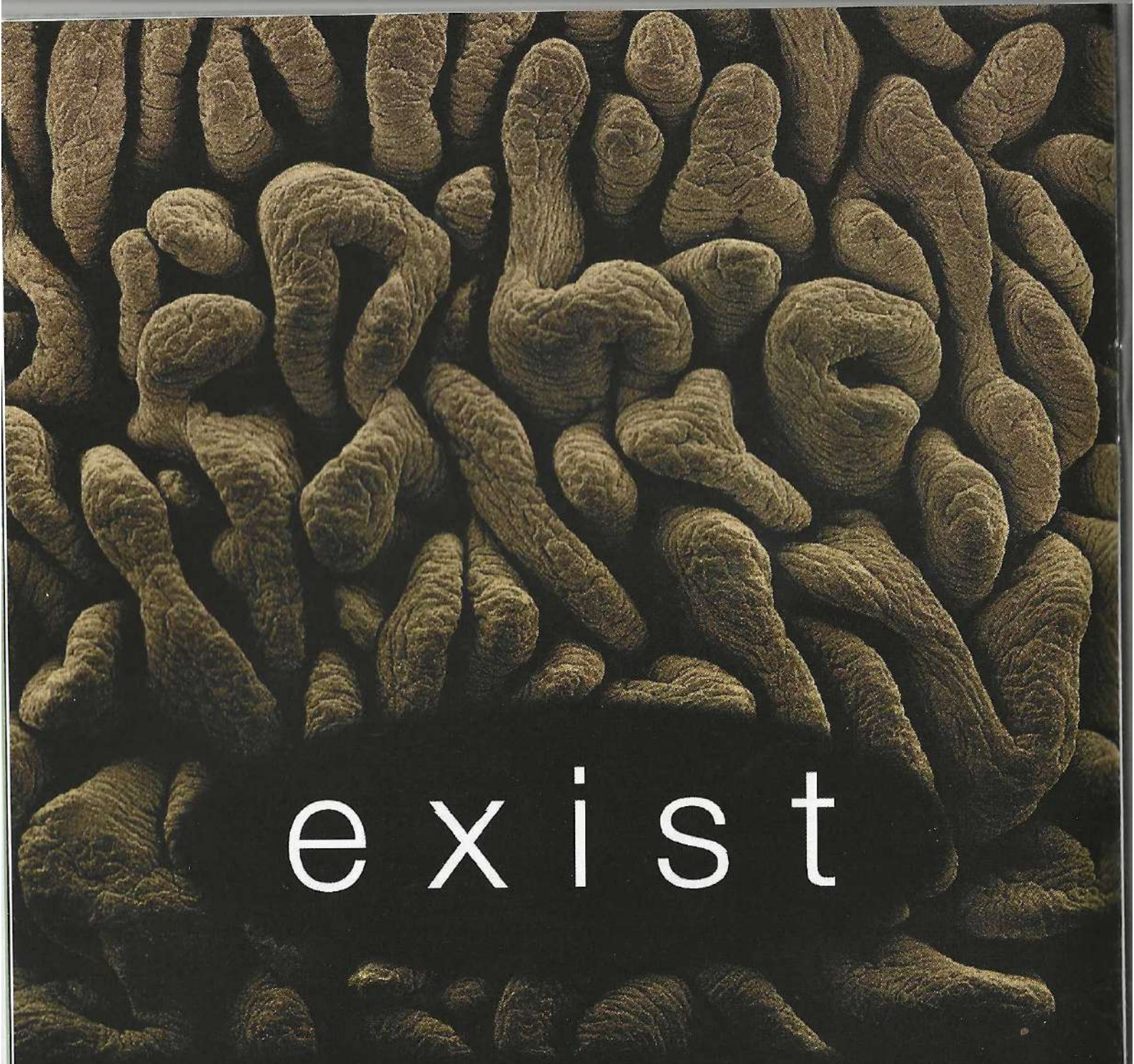
'She Took A Bullet Meant For Me' is out on Tresor in October.

Many quotes used have been taken from an interview with Neil Landstrumm in NYC by John Osselaer - the entire transcript of which can be found at www.overloadmedia.co.uk.

NEIL LANDSTRUMM'S ALL TIME TOP TEN

1) NEW ORDER 'Blue Monday' (Factory)
2) CYBERSONIK 'Technarchy' (Plus 8)
3) EARLY GREEN VELVET (Relief)
4) CRISTIAN VOGEL 'Absolute Time' (Tresor)
5) MODEL 500 'No UFOs' (Metroplex)
6) LEO ANIBALDI 'Noise Generation' (ACV)
7) DBX 'Losing Control' (Accelerate)
8) ANYTHING BY THE MOVER
9) TRIBE CALLED QUEST 'Midnight Marauders' (Jive)
10) LFO 'LFO' (Warp)

WORDS> Alex Ward



exist

exist presents a compilation
of alternative music from:
oliver ho, anthony child, claude young, fumiya tanaka...

EXIST

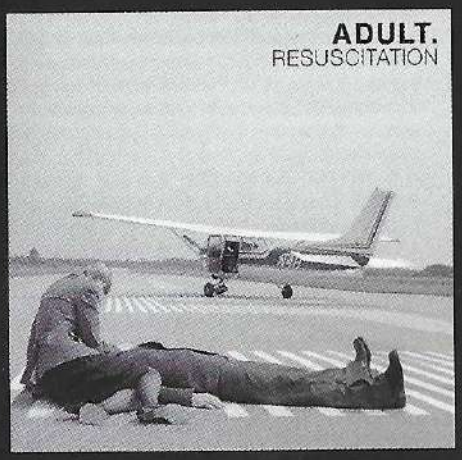
exist - a continuing experiment in multimedia

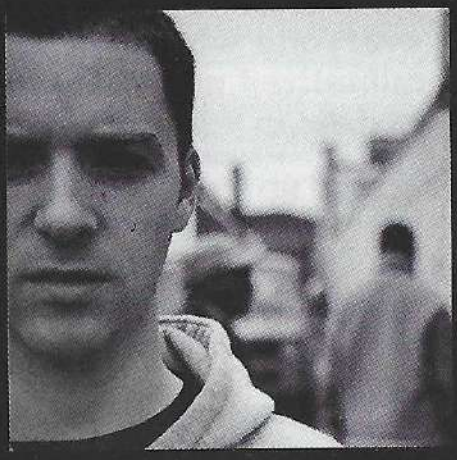
>left to right> top to bottom>

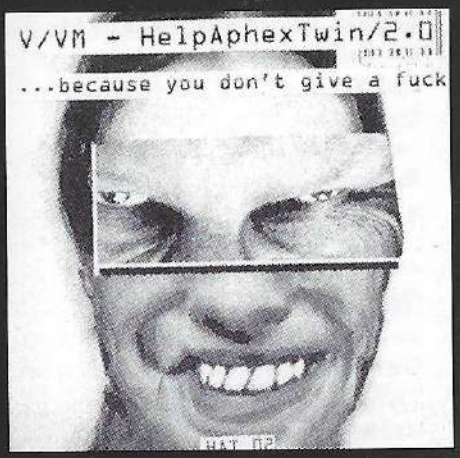
Adult. 'Resuscitation', James Ruskin,
US Collective, Si Begg, Russell Haswell,
V/VM 'Help Aphex Twin', Susumu Yakota,
Japanese Telecom, Fischerspooner, Justin Berkovi,
Carl Craig Presents Abstract Funk Theory,
Seelenluft Meets Acapulco 11

OVERLOAD

NEW RELEASES

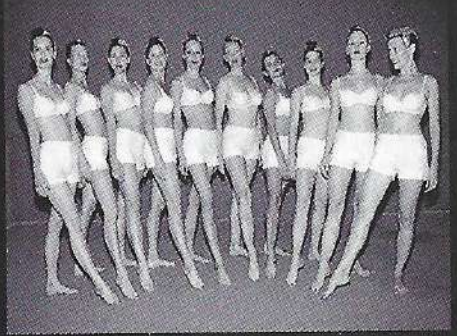






CARL CRAIG PRESENTS
ABSTRACT FUNK THEORY

SEELENLUFT / SYNCHRONSCHWIMMER-EP
SILVERCITY-BOB MEETS ACAPULCO 11



WELCOME to the new music release section of Overload. Thanks to everyone who has submitted material for review in version 8.0.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the amount of material currently being received, we regret we cannot guarantee coverage of every item sent in for review. Further reviews however can be located at www.overloadmedia.co.uk.

The opinions expressed within these pages are those of individual reviewers and not necessarily those of Overload Magazine.

Releases are listed alphabetically by label.

REVIEW SQUAD:

Gavin Weale, Andy Gain, Ian Trowell, Tuff Hiederman, Valerie Snails, Fat Boy, SZA, Franklyn J, Low.life, Miles Hawthorne, Edward Blake, Motorboy, Dave Green, Lucinda Marconi, Daniel Jackson, Nick Doherty, Pam O'Waugh, Boomer.

SINGLES

BEN LONG 'Payback EP' (Advanced)
His first outing since the 'Imperial Leather EP' on Tortured sees Mr Long once more comes up with the goods on this faultless four-tracker of club techno. The real gems are the A- side cuts: 'Hooverz', with that infamous hardcore noise interrupting a classic Long-style cascading arpeggio, and the stop start action of 'In The Nick of Time' with it's punchy, basic rhythm and subtle background noise. Another successful foray from an accomplished producer. **AG**

EROTEK 'Now Playing - In Detroit' (Afro Syntrix)
Having played heavily on Detroit's WJLB radio and released on Metroplex and Direct Beat (as Dre' Brown), Erotek emerges with this highly eclectic EP. Combining his efforts with those of Mike Grant, he has successfully managed to mix Ghetto electro with hop hop, bass rumbling old skool jungle and light club house - infusing all with his own editing style and a whole load of Detroit class. **AG**

SHARAM JEY AND NICK K 'Deeper' (Airtight)
Two deep and percussive tribal house tracks that wouldn't be out of place in Danny Tenaglia's record box. Side A builds nicely with bubbling FX, punctuated by a 'deeper' sample. The flip 'Shaka', probably more of a crowd-pleaser due to its well placed drops, boasts swinging drums and a low slung rumbling bassline. Probably not quite tough enough for strictly techno DJ's but recommended to fans of this sound. **MH**

ZACH CORBELL 'The Tonight EP' (Aquarius)
Filter-Disco, what a wonderful invention. The layering of pop-techno and the catchiest dance-floor loops that any genre's ever had to offer. Zach probably bought the disco record for this tune from a charity shop for 50p, so it's a nice safe investment too. Yup, Filter-Disco is a good idea all round, until you hear it for more than 2 minutes. grrrrrrr... **EB**

MAX DULEY 'Bliss Within Agony' (Arc)
The fourth Arc release goes further towards splitting Duley from the sound of his Ealing contemporaries with cleanly produced and diverse tracks. From the stern kick drums, spiralling bass and persistent hi-hats of 'Sticky Fingers' through to the more familiar looped tackle of 'Backlash Boy' and the grungy space-grind of 'Home Is Where The Hate Is', it's all decidedly dark stuff with a pretty strong bite. Check the freaky reverberations of 'Eastern Rumble' - a ghostly driving cut which builds gradually into a Planet Rhythm-style thumper. **VS**

MAX DULEY 'Canal' (Arc)
Every cut on this EP sounds like it's speeding up and slowing down, yet somehow maintains momentum. Mmm... No doubt this four tracker would cause a fair bit of disorientation down at yer local discotheque. Lots of snappy percussion, off-key synths and wigged-out textures, with the jack happy groove of 'Perfect Skin' perhaps the pick of the bunch. **DJ**

MARK HAWKINS 'Destitution Resolution EP' (Automatic)
Mark Hawkins continues his crusade for new-wave disturbing funk with this EP of sick beats and terrified noise. Somewhere in amongst the sonic skree and off-kilter techno rhythms there lies a pretty unique vision, where the party comes head-to-head with introspective sound analysis. But that sounds far too serious for what is essentially a fun record - something to make the dancefloor fall over, despite their best attempts to get back on their feet and keep raving to the sounds of this producer's vision of friendly lunatic noise. **EB**

CHRIS COWIE Frisky (Bellboy)
From Edinburgh via Camden, Chris Cowie may well be keen to shrug off the trance-tinged image of the Hook imprint. He achieves this to some degree with 'Silver', a deep techno groover that builds subtly and tastefully, and to a lesser degree with 'Frisky', which treads a relentless path between techno and hard house. Suspicion lies in the conspicuous absence of a decent bassline, leaving this release a little wanting. **GW**

>RECOMMENDED<
SUBURBAN KNIGHT VS LOCUTUS 'Oblivion' (Bipolar)
James Pennington (AKA Suburban Knight) sides with Locutus to produce an intriguing three-and-a-bit-tracker. Although the lengthy press release neglects to say which of the three tracks is which, the long cut on the A is pure Suburban Knight - tightly programmed percussion and sublime melodies with that extra atmospheric edge to needed to fill a whole side of vinyl (not neglecting the sound bite bolted on the end). The tracks on the flip, presumably forged by studio friend Locutus, both cut the mustard in the tough abstract loop stakes, but it's Pennington's main track that makes this a worthwhile purchase. **FJ**

JAKE & THE ELECTRIC NUDES Stella's In The Swing (blueface)
Following their inaugural outing on Jenetic, Jake takes his Electric Nudes on another quirky upbeat outing. 'Stella's In The Swing' is too fast for the style and lacks any real kind of funk you can latch on to. However, flip over to the two tracks by Dr Flexible (one of his own plus one J&TEL remake) and there's plenty of original cyberpunk 4/4 funk to get any techno party swinging. **FJ**

EEDIO 'Connect' (Bpitch Control)
Further evidence of electro's twin obsessions with all things futuristic and all things Eighties comes in the form of this interesting EP from French newcomers to the Bpitch stable. 'Future Combinaison' is clearly influenced by Depeche Mode and Soft Cell with its overall retro electronic feel and vocals courtesy of Nancy Fortune. The other three tracks are more abstract and downtempo, featuring space-age atmospherics under stoned breakbeats. **M**

SASCHA FUNKE '2:1 Fur Die Liebe' (Bpitch Control)
Opening with a lo-tek anthem of a track this EP swerves into alley-dodging grooves wearing cartoon shoes for 3 more tracks of skuzzy electro-pop. Get down that record shop! **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
TRIKE 'Nachtfahrt' (BPitch Control)
Despite one or two below-par releases, Berlin's BPitch Control label has been providing a bounty of innovative and off-the-wall electronic music from deepest Europe. This, their 23rd release, should find plenty of appeal with fans of their back-catalogue, providing four very different compositions drawing techno, disco and house influences into the melting pot. For more adventurous club DJs, the EP is well worth buying for the title track alone - a guaranteed floor filler featuring fat hi-hats over a squelchy synth riff, disorientating keys and lots of top end noise. Elsewhere 'Rast' exudes a crunchy old-skool vibe not dissimilar to The Hacker's material, 'Radio' lays skeletal electro beats amongst glitch-ridden interference, and finally 'Tempomat' changes tack for a meandering disco cut up. **FJ**

MEGAMIX 2001 'Breakin' Allstars' (Breakin' Records)
Ed DMX's label celebrates its past successes by releasing a compilation album and this, a megamix of previous hits. Anyone familiar with the Breakin' Records sound will know what to expect - lots of retro electro high on humour and lo-fi electronic fun(k) in true early Eighties style (well it is a megamix!). Side two features 'Night Visions' - a darker cut with sinister futuristic overtones, and 'Blimp Beats' - a squelchy, 303 based minimal track. Funky electro grooves for the Commodore 64 generation. **M**

TORTURED SOUL 'I Might Do Something Wrong Pt 1&2' (Central Park)
Imagine if the Iseley Brothers had ditched the guitar and made classy US house instead. Well that's exactly what this offering from Tortured Soul with the vocal talents of Christian Urich sounds like, perhaps adding the odd burst of a romantic Stevie Wonder. High praise indeed, but well deserved by this sensuous and classy production. With seven mixes to choose from over two bits of vinyl this'll find a place in almost any house set. **AG**

SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES

>RECOMMENDED<
2B 'Flying High' (Choke)
Whilst this isn't an awesome release, it's very consistent and it's a double-pack - so credit due, have a recommended. Byron Bogues (rockin' name) has produced a collection of tracks that fuse the hard techno house sound of West London (where's that place again?) with the production values of My Bloody Valentine. Well, close anyway. I like the result and so will you. It's maybe not the sort of thing that's gonna engage you in a record shop, but after a few listens... **EB**

CIRCULATION 'Ltd #7' (Circulation)
A limited edition 12" with only one track has got to be something special if it's gonna make you part with your hard earned vinyl credits, but this release from Circulation should do just that. An infectious popping disco bassline and super solid kicks build effectively with muted vocals, erratic stabs and cymbal bursts. It might not be getting anywhere but it will certainly cause a stir along the way. **AG**

FUNKY DERRICK 'Love Me Still - Ding & Dong + Toby One Remixes' (Clip)
Second remix instalment of a popular previous Clip moment. Swag / Muzik chap Dave Mothersole teams up with Nils Hess for a simple yet reasonably effective Mr G style reworking with snappy percussion and some slightly haunting strings - cleanly done but low on ideas. Toby One from London's Tag stable turns in a more punchy take adopting a filtered disco flavour with fair levels of production flair. **DJ**

Ben Nevile 'Vancouver and Fairfield' (Context 08)
Another release hits from the prolific Californian label that specialises in innovative minimal electronics. This time a new artist who featured on the various Context 06 ep , Vancouver based producer Ben Nevile, releases his solo debut. Four tracks on offer here of shuffling classic house beats and warm, fuzzy melodies. With a slight leaning towards dub, think slick, chugging funk that will get heads nodding and bodies moving. This is house with tech ideas and influences, but most definitely not tech-house. **MH**

PORTABLE 'Patterns And Signals' (Context)
First proper release from this native South African who has relocated to London. This background has obviously left Portable refreshingly free from traditional influences, resulting in an individual fusion of dub, electronica and house. Weird, mashed-up house rhythms and tribal sounding drums are overlaid with clicks, whirs and general noise to mess with heads as well as move feet. Harsh, digital funk that is just right for skanking round a dancefloor to in the early morning. Particularly cool is the Sutekh remix of the title track. **MH**

V/A 'Thredes & Vaynes' (Context)
A mini compilation out of San Francisco, featuring three hometown heroes plus new protagonists Portable and Ben Nevile. I much prefer the B-side of this release, Ben Nevile offering us a warped disco number in that trashy, minimal Context style while Safety Scissors goes for a poppier, more quirky take on minimalism. Side A generally has a slow, pulsing, dublike sound, with Portable overlaying slices of garbled conversation, while Sutekh relies on surface noise and chopped up synth sounds to spice things up. Overall a solid representation of Californian cacophony. **MH**

MARK WILLIAMS 'The Roots' (Dark House Music)
That squiggle in production that has attracted praise from the likes of Mills is in further evidence here, with a soulful EP from London-based Williams. 'Tell Me' sweeps a female vocal over the top of its jacking, syncopated rhythm; 'Hot Pussy' goes slower, deeper, darker and dreamier, while title cut 'Roots' crashes along, twists and headfucks you in the middle, and casts a trail of dub reggae horn samples in its wake. **GW**

THE AUTOMATES 'Phuture' (Dark House Music)
Two mixes on offer. The Scan X mix is a well thought out but a pretty standard loop-driven affair. More interesting is the wonderful (if slightly slow) original mix, where tough punchy beats are layered over sci-fi atmospherics and a looped Giorgio Moroder melody. Imagine a smiley dancefloor grinding to DJ Hell in a dark sweaty basement club. Perfect music to raise spirits on house and techno dancefloors alike. **M**

MEN OF NOISE 'The Yeti Remixes' (Definition)
Four takes on Chistian Fischer and Hartmut Kiss's original. First up is Ade Fenton who offers a pounding and vocal stab-laden monster, let down only by a couple of ill-considered fills. Next up is a trip into the heavy kick and cymbals world of Plan-E, filled out with loads of stereo resonant blips and punctuated by some excellent kick rolls and stutters. On the flip Paul Brtschitsch gets all tech-ouse while retaining plenty of dancefloor force before AUX crown the release with a biting synth line and all the pattering funk you can handle, showing the rest what dynamic editing is all about. With four dancefloor cuts of this calibre and two fucked up lock grooves this is a bit of a bargain for loopheads. **TH**

SANDOR CARON 'Zwepg Typis' (Delsin)
More fine mood-moulding moments from Holland's kings of the cushion, Delsin. Having previously appeared on the label in a collaborative production as Cellvoice, Sandor Caron returns with a re-edited mix of a track previously available on a Music For Speakers EP, plus further mixes of the tune by himself and staunch Delsin supporter Kirk Degiorgio. The 'Relaxo Abstracto Rmx' suits the title well, fusing a sprinkling of twanging guitar over shaky future jazz rhythms and thick cinematic strings. On the flip the 'Poesco Rmx' keeps the strings but takes a more accessible instrumental hip hop approach, whist Degiorgio turns in a deep reworking pitching intricate abstract melodies meeting over complex breakbeats. **FJ**

FOUR TET 'No More Mosquitoes' (Domino)
More of Kieran Hebden's quirky yet accessible genre collision sound. On this EP you get the anti-insect mantra of 'No mosquitoes', taken from the album 'Pause', and three unreleased tracks that show off the breadth of his talent in full. From the ultra slowed down breaks of 'Warmer Places' to the solo 12 string of 'Look after Your Mermaid', Hebden shows that space is everything and the simplest things can be totally engaging when lovingly produced. One man achieving the seemingly impossible. Something fresh in the world of electronic music. **EB**

INLAND KNIGHTS 'Steal The Feel' (Drop)
No let up from Laurence Richie and Andy Riley as Drop Music comes of age with its eighteenth release. Just two tracks - the casual party groove of 'I do' and the smoky nostalgic plod of 'Turn, both making exquisite use of cut up vocals and rollin' bass like only the Drop Boys know how. Less energetic than recent twelves, but sounding fresh enough to these ears. **DG**

>RECOMMENDED<
MYSTIC LETTER K 'Mystic Letter K EP' (Electrix)
Five releases down the line and Billy Nasty's nu-skool electro label stands firm as one of the best exponents of the style. Following in the footsteps of Umek, Marco Bailey and Cisco Ferreira, Swedish powerblaster Cari Lekebusch turns in a four-track stormer that touches perhaps more ground than the EPs delivered from his predecessors. 'Caprilectrix' is pure hard-assed body shock funk, the chaotic circus of 'Moto' exudes Cari's familiar vocodered vibe, 'Earth / Mirai' is a cheeky take on the traditional Kraftwerkian formula and 'Boot' is a shorter yet highly effective composition, building from grungy distortion into a sinister slab of bubbling techbeat. Check dis. **DJ**

ELECTRONIC CORPORATION 'Behind the Wheel' (Electronic Corporation)
Four tracks of Germanic techno, one side of traditional fare with old school keys, and the other more dub influenced. Unfortunately these are basic tunes with not enough swing or funk to really cut it with me. The tracks start to plod very quickly and don't go anywhere really. It all just sounds very flat and run of the mill, with nothing to make the record stand out from hundreds of other similar releases. **MH**

>RECOMMENDED<
RED MOON 'Centipede/ Caterpiller' (Eukahouse)
Eukahouse have been on the case with their last few releases, and this is no exception. The title track oozes electronic funk, chunky bass and pounding kickdrums, while "Caterpillar" is a tech-dub sizzler. With the current glut of bland, proggy/ trance nonsense being churned out at the moment by all and sundry, this is a real gem. Take heed. **B**

ALENIA 'Bailare' (Eukatech)
Quality Cuban funk if you please, from Slovenian-born Alec Cacovic. The title track gets some fat stabs out over a stompy techno groove, adds a spot of Cuban chanting and some congas, then struts about the dancefloor with a big cigar. On the flip 'Armitage' and 'What Ever It takes (Balls Remake)' both opt for a more stripped-down percussive angle, working in even bigger stabs but always keeping the focus on firmly on the feet. **FJ**

>RECOMMENDED<
MARCO LENZI 'Rhythm Maker EP' (Eukatech)
Very playable techno two-tracker from Molecular head honcho, picking up spin-time from a diverse range of top jocks. The A-side cut is the funkier of the pair, utilising an incessant Purpose Maker-esque riff, fat hi-hat action and an effective filtered breakdown, whilst the flip ventures into much more sinister territory with dark atmospherics building around a punchy kick and layers of uncluttered percussion. Solid club clobber. **FJ**

H. LARSSON 'Gasoline Horses' (Evil)
A three tracker of dark, metallic, bass led loopery with more than a few tricks up it's sleeve. Sophisticated filtering and original percussive elements ensure that these little beauties will stand out from the crowd and blissful pad breakdowns provide a welcome break from the drum loop onslaught. Not as fat as some but there has to be some compromise to complexity I guess. **AG**

SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES

>RECOMMENDED<

BLUPRINT 'Freedub' (Exceptional)
Three tracks of sublime sunshine music, perfect for those long, hot summer days. 'Freedub' moulds deep bass licks around a loungy breakbeat and a gentle female vocal, while 'Pesto (Blu Bossa)' boasts more laidback guitar, this time married with shimmering percussion and a meandering groove. 'Moonraker' is more urgent, with broken up beats, but still maintains the light, dreamy mood with sweeping atmospherics and a gorgeous breakdown. Music to kick back and lose yourself in, like getting into a cool bath on a hot day. Pure bliss, and like the label says, 'exceptional'. **MH**

SUSUMU YAKOTA 'Could heaven ever be like this?' (Exceptional)
To call a record label Exceptional, you've got to have big balls and some damn good releases to back it up. I was concerned after listening to side A, an average house track with a low slung bassline and a fairly cheesy trumpet riff. However the Malawi Rocks mix on the flip is a different matter. A rough breakbeat, sci-fi atmospherics and spot on production craft space age funk that is reminiscent of Carl Craig. Praise indeed. **MH**

BENGE 'Baud & Unary' (Expanding)
Second release in Expanding Records 7" series and again the overall feel is chilled yet moody. Both tracks are alternative versions on the one theme. Minimal tones build with a sense of unknown urgency and paranoia to command full attention whilst the tracks clanks and clicks add a pensive air of impending doom. The release is let down though, as both versions are very similar. It would have been nice to have heard some more, but impressive all the same. **M**

ANTONI FRANKOWSKI 'L5/AEX/BC' (Expanding)
Elaborate packaging, heavy vinyl and a limited release perfectly complement this 7" of electronic noodlings from the experimental but still melodic school of electronica. Although the tempo is largely undefined, the four tracks provoke an overall sense of wellbeing and calm. Warm beats undulate rather than crash and the mood is maintained with a 'less is more' approach to the composition. Another worthy addition to the ever-growing electronica back catalogue. **M**

AAS 'Implode' (Fathom)
Three tracks of tough loopy techno laced with a smattering of atmospheric washes and FX. Both 'Cyborg' and 'AAS Theme' are somewhat lame grooves despite the quality production, but A1, entitled 'Implode' and recently featured on an E4 documentary, grabs the required amount of immediacy to do dancefloor damage, despite it's formulaic nature. One peach in three makes this a reasonable purchase. **AG**

THE YOUNGSTERS 'End' (F-Communications)
'End' is the third release from the Gaelic pairing and is every bit as good as their first two stunning releases for Laurent Garnier's F-Communication label. Three tracks of deep, sexy techno/tech house that the French seem to have an uncanny knack for. 'Anxious Boy' is just a dream to listen to - lazy house that's perfect in every way. They're going to be massive very soon. M

MODELER 'Crisp Still EP' (Front Room Recordings)
Better known for his 'Solid Groove Productions', Dave Taylor takes a more techy angle with this groove-laden dubby three-tracker. The slowly evolving minimal house of 'You Got Me' kicks things off with it's subtle vocal stabs and sweeping FX bursts that punctuate it's otherwise monotonous progress. 'Indirect' on the other hand goes for a much more striking breaks rhythm with some fierce percussion and backward rotary squeaks. The title track takes the prize however with a fat and funky G-Man style groove and a lot of well thought out and powerful editing that keeps the track in constant, insistent movement and allows it to glide between sumptuous dub and pumping floor fodder without losing momentum. The kids will love it. **AG**

TATA BOX INHIBITORS 'Plasmids' (Future Groove)
Bottom marks for the imaginative label name but what of the music? Well, it's halfway there to greatness and it's ...Trance! Jesus, maybe I'm not hearing enough stuff, but this seems to be more innovative than a lot of 'proper' music these days (you know what I mean). For a start it's slow and brooding, with ruff drums that will inspire/perspire a dancefloor. But it's also utterly cheesy and boring. I am - I admit - confused. **EB**

THE WEE DJS 'Not' (Gassoline)
7 tracks of EP defying electro. Quality gear built around the kind of tight, snapping and popping metallic rhythms you'd expect. The opener stands out for its soaring head fuckin synth line disorientation. Other tracks range from the atmospheric to the sparser to the more industrial. Nice variation and value for cash. If you like your electro you cannae go wrong. **SZA**

MENDO 'Everybody I Got Him - Mr G. Remixes' (Get Groovy)
Fuck knows what the original of sounds like but one thing's for sure - Colin McBean's deep housey remakes kick in all the right places. The 'That Sound Dub' mix lays snappy percussion layers over pulsing dub elements, akin to his recent release for Defected, whilst on the flip his 'Dr Feelgood' mix takes a more techy angle kicking out a more rhythmic vibe over old skool bass and tinkling stabs. Not as essential as his Phoenix G output, but functional and floor friendly nonetheless. **VS**

MIKE PARKER 'Copper Variations' (Geophone)
Mike Parker's creative mind occupies a black cathedral filled with brooding ghosts if these two mixes are anything to go by. Deep kicks and whooping sub bass chug along over an enormous ambient soundspace on the first mix, with each element given a cricket pitch each to play in. The second ups the tempo but sticks to the cavernous theme, this time filling the space more and with darker, foreboding elements. Also featured is an 'ArcForm' mix from Max Duley that takes a more drum-centric approach with galloping sub kicks and haunting, muted chimes carried along by his trademark vocal snippets and jovial hats. The break and kick back make this a highly usable piece of Arc art. **AG**

AUBREY 'The Weaver / Shots Through Time' (Geushky)
South coast stalwart Aubrey debuts on Ian Void's club-related label concern with two rigid and (for him) surprisingly pounding techno tracks. Both seem to lack the unpredictable grooves that makes Aubrey's work so interesting, and it's difficult to know what else to say about 'em. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<

NECTAR 'A Taste Of Succulence' (Grayhound)
DJ Garth's Grayhound imprint excels itself once more with three classy tracks of twisted deep house from Adam Tenenbaum. There's a heavy dub flava across all the offerings, with enough diversity and originality to really make this EP really stand out. Best track in my opinion is 'Bellz', which adopts a warped bassy groove peppered by wigged-out clangs, subtle acid lines and squealing top end percussion accompaniments. The pulsing trippy reggae of 'Koncussive' is also going to see a whole heap of stylus interest. **VS**

VERSION ETERNAL 'Remain / Stagger' (Home Style Cooking US)
The debut single from New York DJ Nico grooves and builds into a trippy, hypnotic and downright eerie dub-soaked monster. Mike Ladd (Ninja Tune) adds a twisted slant with a freaky spoken vocal over increasingly growling acid lines and tribal rhythms. With crisp hats, a huge wobbling bassline and skanky reggae vocal samples, "Stagger" will rock the dancefloor and rattle the bass bins. **B**

AJ SCENT 'Tokyo Nightdrive' (Honchos Music)
Justin Brett has been quite prolific of late and this release on Honchos Music easily illustrates why so many deep house labels are so eager to release his stuff. Deep and pensive atmospheres underpin the crispest of rhythms. Two mixes; a super smooth, slightly disco tinged original (mixed in collaboration with fellow Bristolian Jamie Anderson) and the 'Cold Rock Mix' where the dancefloor temperature gets turned up and things go a little more Latin. **M**

TRANCESETTERS 'Synergy' (Hooj)
Now we're talking...The Trancesetters. What do you reckon? Well, both tracks are remixes for a start - not that I know anything about the producers. The Kenneth Graham mix is like Underworld's first album. And it literally does sound like it could have come off it - so that's okay by me. The 'Blackwatch' mix is deep reggae plod-house. Still, better than I thought it was going to be. **EB**

GRAVEL 'Shermanshire / Bishops Distortion' (Infected)
Ant and James Kinetic let rip with two highly fuelled peak time techno tracks. 'Shermanshire' utilises the all too familiar four-note kick pattern over ride cymbals but after the rallying cry of a jet engine start up the pair come up with the goods. The flip is a more funk inspired number which for a while sounds like it might turn into hardhouse but is rescued by a mind shredding synth part, using high speed modulation to full effect. Two hard-hitting productions that are sure to please the fans of this label. **AG**

PRESSURE OF SOUND 'Sideshow EP' (Ink)
Brings to mind a colourful musical. Lots of artificial people getting down to a bugging disco band, all with big cheesy grins on their faces. Hey, life is great! We're all singing and dancing!!! Cue close-up of obnoxious shiny teenage kid, cheering everyone on. Yeah, well I'm here to make your colourful fucking life a bit more miserable. This sucks. Your party sucks. And that dancing... a one-legged dog could do better. **EB**

ELASTIC TRICKERY 'Jam EP' (Insert)
The third release on this Newcastle imprint sees the return of hotly tipped live techno act Elastic Trickery with four tracks that show off their highly diverse sound to the full. Undoubted highlight of the release is 'Bassmosphere' - an enormous wall of bass with virtually no kick but more energy and dynamism than colliding plutonium atoms, coupled with an indisputable knowledge of the dancefloor utilising precise yet spontaneous sounding edits. Proof positive that many other techno producers should be getting out more. **AG**

SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES

FISCHERSPOONER 'Emerge' (International Deejay Gigolos)
This record had cheesy, euro-pop written all over it. Then, I got it. Imagine a retro account of all things good in the eighties, raw vocal hooks and cheesy sounding synths. It's Kraftwerk, Telex and a bit of The Human League given a techno re-work in an unashamedly, quirky way. 'Emerge' it certainly did - a vicious hook that suddenly grabbed me. On the flip, the Detroit Adult crew give it a more familiar four to the floor arrangement, but it's the original's fresh, alternative slant - a sound International DJ Gigolo seem to be championing - that delivers. 'The future of pop is here' proclaimed the press release. They may just be right. **FB**

DJ ASSAULT 'Off The Chain EP' (Intuit-Solar)
"Yo mama, yo daddy, yo sister's a ho". How can he know my family so well? It may not be clever, but it sure is funny. If you don't know the work of Mr Assault, he makes basic Detroit Bass tracks with filthy lyrics and loads of humour, and these two tracks are as good as he's made to date. Booty shakin' and rib tikklin' shit for sure, although strangely tuneful on 'Sometimes' with its drifty soulful keys and organ. **TH**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A Comin From Tha D (Intuit-solar)
As a sampler to the forthcoming compilation LP (reviewed in Overload 7.0) Intuit-Solar bring you this strong four tracker of Detroit electro and ghetto funk. Dopplereffekt kick things off with the electro classic, 'Pornoactress' swiftly followed by DJ Godfather asking a lady of ill repute 'Watchulookinat' in fine ghetto base style. Keith Tucker of Aux-88 fame provides a moment of taste with his sparse and melodic 'It's Time' while Aaron Carl gets back to basics with the Dance Mania style of 'No No', as featured on Dave Clarke's World Service Mix. All in all a quality collection of hard to find tracks from the city that likes to shout about itself. **AG**

MIKE DEVINE & DJ DEE 'Foucault Loves Disco EP' (JJ Records)
An air of mystery hangs over this twisted take on disco tinged house. Unknowns Mike Devine and DJ Dee demonstrate a very sophisticated grasp of manipulating the often clichéd process of cutting up disco loops, especially considering that their combined ages don't even reach 40. Hmmmm. Whatever their background, the four tracks on this EP run the gamut between pumping romps through phased violins and oddball stabs on the A-side, to a more bass-heavy workout on the flip as well as a searing techno rumbler thrown in for good measure. One of the most interesting house-style cut'n'pastes of recent memory. **GW**

BETRIEB 'Balthus EP' (Klang)
Four varied tracks here that utilise some similar sounds but done in different styles. A1 is minimal funk, low electronic bleeps and pulses in the vein of Thomas Brinkmann. A2 is beatless and in a classical style, relaxing and melodic. B1 is dubby, with hissy hi-hats and a melancholic lilt. B2 has more typical house arrangements but still in a 'click' style. Another individual and forward-looking release from one of Germany's most consistently interesting labels. **MH**

MYCOP 'Mycop EP' (Klangmilieu)
Klangmilieu was a Berlin based radio show dedicated to playing what other stations discarded that now launches it's own label, seemingly dedicated to releasing records that nobody wants to listen to. Perhaps that's a little harsh. Mycop have made a strong name for themselves with their chaotic live performances but this doesn't really translate and what we are left with is five thinly produced and instantly ignorable pieces of minimal electronics that's only saving grace is the breadth of styles presented. **AG**

SEELENLUFT 'Synchroschwimmer EP' (Klein)
The mind behind 'The Rise And Fall Of Silvercity Bob' is back with a curious mini album with a concept to match, being composed to accompany Acapulco 11 - Swiss syncronised swimmers who performed to this music in Zurich last year. While the sweet sound of Beat Soler's studio continues to melt the heart, the music-writing rarely reaches the dizzying heights of his earlier work - perhaps with the exception of the Hawiian offbeat jazz sounds of 'Land Kur 1' and the two step poetic masterpiece of the Music for the Stars Mix of 'Wasser-Kur 1'. For those new to Seelenluft this may startle and soothe, but for a work wrapped up in such a concrete concept it simply lacks cohesion on the grand scale we've become used to. **AG**

MICHAELANGELO / CHRIS JACKSON 'Jambala / Lost In The Sun' (Labrynth)
Since the 'David' fiasco showed the world of sculpture his inability to do hands, Michaelangelo has turned his own hand to loopy percussive techno and does a pleasing enough job with punches of distorted bass rescuing the otherwise overdone formula. Master craftsman of West Coast Tech'ous Chris Jackson turns in a thundering beauty that makes full use of toms, drifting 'aaah' vocals and tight, punchy production to come up with fine crossover goods. **TH**

TOM CLARK '2 Lanes' (Laufwerk)
Following releases on Morris Audio and Superbra, Tom switches attention to his own Laufwerk imprint with his own unique and brooding take on the tech'ouse sound. Incredible clarity (allowing space for his more innovative moments), bass-heavy grooves and constant forward progression make this a release of worth. The A-side cut, 'From Two Lanes', stands out with a degree of menace rarely equalled by it's contemporaries and some solid bass action to boot. The highly shuffled 'Overtaking Lane' offers a lighter note and an almost clicks'n'cuts angle to his deep housey sound. Clark also turns his hand to noodley electro, but this might be best forgotten. **AG**

GERD 'Far Away Places' (Life Enhancing Audio)
Sweet summer soul music from Gerd-Jan Bijl and his band of collaborators, blending the sensuous timbres of saxophone, Fender Rhodes and flute behind laidback beats on the eponymously titled 'Far Away Places'. 'The Rally' heads into more uptempo bongo-driven territory, whereas the A-side is a shimmering deep house workout with a nicely dirtied bass line, but ultimately all revolving around that man and his fabulous Fender Rhodes. **TH**

PLASTYC BUDDHA 'Rhodes Royce' (Life Enhancing Audio)
Following on from the release of their 'Throwing Stones in Placid Pools' LP, Peter Verschueren and Stephan Parmentier continue their love of laid back jazzy instrumentation, and particularly the Rhodes, with this EP. Somehow their sound manages to transcend the sleep inducing masses in this field and instead offers a more engaging and uplifting listening experience. Also featured is a Nigel Hayes (Chaser) mix of the title track that takes a sparser and more uptempo approach while maintaining the airy blissed-out feel of the original. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
GRANT DELL & GARETH OXBY PRESENTS 'Tribalation EP2' (Loaded)
Punchy deep house from the well-liked Brighton label - perhaps a little too commercial sounding for some, but top quality gear nonetheless. 'Need To Move' is an awesome slab of twisted 4/4 funk - airing a progressive Drop Music vibe with plenty of dubbed out FX and rhythmic variation. On the flip 'Skywalking' is a dubbier, more vocalised excursion, which badly overdoes the vocals around the first break but settles back into a hypnotic groove without too much discomfort. **FJ**

METTLE MUSIC 'Basis' (Low Pressings)
Four mixes of this warm and floaty tech-houser, showcasing the highly polished production talents of this duo from Manchester. With past releases on Toko, you know what to expect; hefty sub-bass, gliding chords and an overall feel that manages to be clinical, yet organic. Perfect for those still grooving well after sunrise. **B**

HIROAKI IZUKA 'Summer Storm EP' (Majesty)
Rising Japanese techno export kicks ass in a grinding, loopy kind of way for Mike Dearborn's label. Lacking a little in the funk department, but highly useful tools for those DJs who like to whip up the dancefloor in a dark percussive storm. The cuts on the A-side take a cerebral cyclic tack and will no doubt prove effective floor fodder when applied properly. On the flip 'Mad Computer' works a forceful jarring groove to good effect. **VS**

MIKE DEARBORN 'The Dictator' (Majesty)
I used to like the music Mike Dearborn put out on Djax a few years back but to be honest times have changed. Unfortunately his sound hasn't. Typical sparse drum workouts with very stale sounding 303 lines and obvious 'heard it all before' hi hat drops may have been okay six years ago but time should have allowed for some development in style. This stays close to the original Chicago blueprint but sounds very basic and boring nowadays. **MH**

MICKEY HUSTLE 'Spanish Harlem' (Majik Gruuv)
Mickey Hustle and Mike Dearborn's title track is a lively, Latin piece of housework. All the usual suspects are present; an uplifting piano riff, a funky filtered bass-line and Chicago beats. However, it becomes different as weird string effects are introduced, and add to this some excellent salsa percussion that drives the track along and you have a tune that really works the dancefloor. Unfortunately, the b-side 'Misunderstood' describes itself well. Similar to the flip, only far less convincing, the 'Yeah' vocal stab is a big 'No'. Despite that, still worth a listen. **FB**

WYNDELL LONG 'Dying Days' (Majik Gruuv)
No big surprises here. Wyndell Long serves up another slice of chunkin' Chicago house, and its not bad. Rooted deep in disco and interestingly incorporating melodic vocal riffs, it's backed up by typically jackin' beats and twisted effects. However, it definitely veers towards 'deep-house' territory, albeit with a slightly tougher edge. All directed at the dance floor, each of the four tracks have their nice touches and are extremely well produced and although none shine outright they provide an interesting slant on the deep house theme. **FB**

DJ ONE FINGER 'House Fucker Remixes' (Missile)
Yep, it's that charming track once more. Tim Taylor and Clemen's Neufeld's minor classic gets fucked over by German techno uberlord Thomas Heckmann and bawdy Londoners Get Fucked. Both tracks exemplify the disparate styles with admirable levels of punch - Heckmann's Germanic stomp works plenty of dance floor grind and Get Fucked's bass heavy houser saunters along in sexy undergarments. **VS**

RECOMMENDED:—

1. bogdan raczynski new single out now LUSH

2. universal indicator acid megamix CD

3. robert normandeau – Sonars
(award-winning acousmatic music)

4. peter green "macbeth..." – classical taste ✓

+ ovuca – wasted sunday – lush & mellow

+ railway raver – ... that bloody drum machine EP

+ THE BRAINDANCE COINCIDENCE compilation ↖ WICKED

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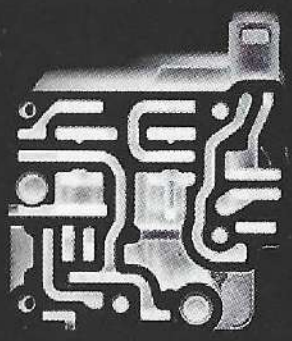

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SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES

FRANKIE BONES 'Metropolitan EP' (Missile)
Brooklyn based techno stalwart continues to innovate and inspire with this, Missile's 48th release. On the A-side 'The Real Brooklyn Bounce' features delicately programmed grinding organs over slow and distorted NY kicks, whilst on the flip 'Skate, Rock and Roll' forges a more traditional 'Bones' style 808 break track with choral vocals and plenty of jump around appeal. The real gem on this release however is 'Inner Freak Style' - an ultra deep electro track with melancholic 'Euro synth' chords and nostalgic vocoded vocals, showing a side of Bones we rarely see. The big softy. **TH**

>RECOMMENDED<
BLUE STATES 'Elios Therepia' (Memphis Industries)
Nearly a year after the release of his first album, nothing sounds quite as sweet or life affirming as Blue States. For those that were too blind to see then, the album is being re-issued this summer, which probably has something to do with this release of one of the LP's brightest moments. Well described in it's press as "Morricone penning a Eurovision winner" Elios Therapia will melt the frostiest heart with it's sumptuous strings and guitar. But look out, because Patrick Dawes has been on remix duty with a kazoo piss take on the original and Tiresius turns in a funky breaks mix to boot. If that's not enough they also throw in two brand new tracks from Andy Dragazis that do nothing to detract from his reputation for heartfelt musical genius and will soon have the tumbleweed blowing past your speakers. Look out for his forthcoming mix of Papua New Guinea. **AG**

FORT LAUDERDALE 'Traces Of Places Until The Morning' (Memphis Industries)
Steve Webster and Toby Jenkins follow up their debut long-player on Worm Interface with this plucky EP for Memphis Industries. Drifting perilously close to 80's synth pop, their sound is saved from anal banality by childish frivolity and a quirky sense of humour. Although the production is accomplished, there is little that stands out, making for an enjoyable but rather forgettable listening experience. **AG**

V/A 'Moitie Moitie' (Merchurachrome)
Long running Swiss co-operative Mercurachrome present their second release of Scandanavia, Subhead, Sativae-inspired techno through the mediums of their own artists Smees and Smooky, plus Subhead's Jason Leach. Smooky runs away with the prizes here with a colossal kick over surgically distorted synths, followed closely by Smees, who sounds reminiscent of an early Landsrumm, huge synth chords and all. The Jason Leach track lets the side down somewhat and you can't help but think that they'd have done better without his promotional presence. Especially when the collectives own work is so blatantly shit kicking. **AG**

MINDTOURS / DR WATSON 'Mindtours 03' (Mindtours)
More minimalist machine funk from deepest Wales, with label head honcho Steevio going head to toe with fellow Welshman Dr. Watson for further forays across the techno dancefloor. As with previous Mindtours excursions, there's a distinct tribal tinge to all three constructions that'll suitably entertain jocks and punters alike, although it's the progressively warped rhythms and tones of 'Nocturnia' that'll see the most rotation. **VS**

INDIGO KENNEDY 'Elevation 7 EP' (Molecular)
Despite the excessively linear beats throughout much of this EP, Mr Kennedy proves once more that few can let a tune effortlessly glide and swell the way he can. In an era of forced DJ-friendly edits it's a refreshing change to hear the subtleties of rolling synth percussion and broken pulse width buzzes doing the work for a change. The drums are given just enough room at the right moments to kick the momentum off once more and original use of snares and cymbals provide a lesson to many a banal ride-cymbal exponent. Class. **AG**

SOME WHITE GUY 'Warzone / Mimic' (Morpheus Productions)
Debut solo release for Walsall vinyl junkie Jason Carter (previously recording with Oliver Way as Morpheus Productions). 'Warzone' is a raw edged, hard jackin' affair, based around unrelenting 909 beats and intense synth stabs opens, followed by 'Mimic,' a more minimal, quirky track. 'Warzone' is by far the better of the two but the EP's standout track on the EP is Marco Lenzi's remix of 'Mimic.' Here Marco takes the previous template and totally re-interprets it, adding much needed depth and warmth to produce a tight, soulful version perfectly suited to late night locked in dancefloor action. **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
CHERRY BOMB 'Live Sampler' (Music Man)
Purist techno funk from Richard Brown seeing the Sheffield Swag-man exercise his polished production technique over a fine quartet of percussive club grooves. All four are infused with a quirky synthetic edge, with the cuts on the B-side most likely to secure DJ rotation. The live edit of 'Full On Captain' is of particularly note - a deep twister that warbles and mutates with a bubbling sense of urgency. **FJ**

GREEN VELVET 'La La Land' (Music Man)
An ode to Teletubbies? Quite fucking possible. The first new offering from that freaky Chi-guy since 1999's 'Constant Chaos' is a memorable outing, employing a fine whacked-out mantra ("Something 'bout those little pills, unreel the thrills they yield until they kill a million braincells) and sparse jacking percussion with a distinctly retro feeling - guaranteed to fuck with heads, which I guess is the idea. On the flip, Mr Velvet slips into his Geo Vogt guise, providing a tougher, more wigged out remake featuring plenty of spazzed out bassline mayhem for maximum disorientation. **VS**

JUSTIN BERKOVI 'Travels' (Music Man)
Although better know for his off-the-wall take on techno, Justin Berkovi here releases an EP of decidedly floor moving techno gems. All four cuts have a dark, brooding undercurrent combined with tough, pulsating beats. 'Neck It' (the only track to also feature on his recent LP 'Transit') is the harder of the four - an intense bottom ended workout that will have the dancefloor screaming for more. **M**

EVIL C 'Elements' (Morris Audio)
Splendid house from Geneva resident Evil C who dubs up the proceedings with an array of housey styles. From the deep brooding 'Spring' to the techy stabs of 'Syncmyself', the vibe immediately takes hold and maintains a deep and funky groove throughout. The flip meanwhile embraces the looping funky tech house style reminiscent of fellow EU star Lekebusch, coloured throughout with snaking percussive scuffles and off-the-wall stabs. An accomplished twelve for club or home entertainment. **LM**

>RECOMMENDED<
SI BEGG MEETS NEIL LANDSTRUMM 'Restoration EP' (Mosquito)
Heavyweight techno showdown featuring two of the amorphous genre's most innovative. Mssrs Begg and Landstrumm head-to-head with four crackers. Timeless, as you'd expect, my fave hails from 1996 (previously available on the hard to find Noodles Volume 1) and still sounds darn fresh five years on - burly bass skanking and bright spirit raising melodics makes it my perfect summer soundtrack. The others, created via transatlantic sample swapping over the web, range from an electro backboned number to a dark, metal hip hop hinged vocal cut, with both sparring partners trademark moves and grooves in full effect. **SZA**

PURVEYORS OF FINE FUNK 'High Freakuenzee' (Nepenta)
Cranking out the carnival-core, Fine Funketeer Dan Curtain precedes his new POFF LP with this rumblin' slab of drum-driven 4/4 with a frenzied Latino flavour. Set to rock the gaff from clubs and muddy fields to house par-tays and wine bar lobbies, the track comes complete with an equally kicking if somewhat analogous interpretation on the flip from South London Paper boy Crispin J Glover. **VS**

MUSH 'Disco Sludge' (Nest)
Post everything lo-fi grunge tech collaboration between Tobias Schmidt and Cut Out. The rough breakneck beat onslaught opener sounds like a distant Teknival when spannered in the mud on bad ketamine (the effect is unnerving to say the least). 'Antibiotics' is a low-down dirty son of a gun. 'Sludge Rock' is a future dancefloor anthem in a parallel dimension; a slowslow stomper to the chant of "Sludge! Rock!" This doesn't push the boundaries - it leaps over them, stamping the unique Nest imprint firmly in the mud. Sounding like somewhere else altogether. **SZA**

SONIC INSOMNIA 'Sonic Insomnia' (New Religion)
A brave attempt to bring some Black Dog influence into 100% floor friendly music. Both tunes share an edgy, blessed-out feel and a definite drop of soul amongst the stew of analogue-melodicated thumping. True class is some way off for the Insomniacs - but that may be solved with a few early nights. Look after yourself guys. **EB**

FERENC 'The Besugo EP' (Nitsu)
The opening track is 'Top Dancer', and like John Travolta's first delve into disco, it starts promisingly enough. A funky, lo-fi riff then suddenly bursts into bass, beats and a monotone hypnotic synth riff. And then nothing more, except the odd 'warehouse' sound thrown in. 'Top Dancer'? Like my dad, drunk at a wedding. The B-side 'K Proof' is same brand, different flavour. Hans Nieswendt does his best to pick up the pieces and its okay, but bustin' moves to this, I think not. **FB**

SI BEGG AND FRIENDS 'Noodles Discoteque Vol 3' (Noodles)
Genre-defying, edge-pushing, wild and varied compilation sampler from Si Begg's mental Noodles imprint. From the cut n' paste pop mash up from the label boss, destined to be massive in stylish London superduper-club back rooms, to the haunting dot matrix music from a unique Canadian artist, the range paints a typically broad canvas. There's T-Power's friendly, funky breaks track with thick analogue lines and sub assisted oomf; a weirdy beardy deadpan German vocal track, Kraftwerkesque I guess, amusing with cool Devo guitars, and there's more. Mad shit. Love it. **SZA**

JON DELERIOUS 'Heads Down EP' (Nordic trax)
Canadian Mr. Delirious delivers a four-track EP of underground house grooves, with influences varying from disco to jazz to dub. Coming across more like quality DJ tools rather than straight up tracks, these should appeal to those who don't like to leave their records on for too long. **B**

SINGLES SINGLE SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES

AUDIO SOUL PROJECT 'Tectonic Blur EP' (NRK)
NRK continue to set the standard with this West Coast-sounding EP from Chicago based Mazi, famed for his work on Grayhound, Subliminal and his own Gourmet and Simple Soul imprints. Here he presents three tracks of delicious house grooves, set to send the house crowd's knees a'quivering. The A-side cut, 'Moving Paradigm' does the business most with its Chubb Rock break, soaring vocal oohs-and-aahs and spacious but punchy production. **AG**

AEOX 'It's A Boy EP' (Null)
Known for their remix of '2-Raum-Wohnung' and their involvement in the Berlin squat party scene, AeoX are in jovial mood for their debut release. Incorporating clarinet, bass and guitars into their sound they produce disjointed and dirty techno that drifts into Brighton territory at times and into a twisted world of their own at others. Of particular note is 'Kiss My Brain' with it's pounding, distorted bass groove, demented choral undertones and unexpected edits. This is true punk for the techno generation. **AG**

Scuba Z 'Instant Whip' (Odd Records)
This single comes in gaudy packaging that looks better suited to a planned chart hit, containing a radio edit and three mixes. The music also sounds like it is an attempt to crack the Top Forty. Sample based big beat with a vocalist who wants to be Shaun Ryder and cheesy female harmonies, this sounds like a lame version of what Coldcut used to do better over a decade ago. More for Loaded readers, than Overload readers I reckon. **MH**

SILENT PARTNERS 'None Of Your Business' (Optional)
First outing on this label dedicated to taking a more soulful approach to techno via greater use of melody and textures. The main theme of the release is funky building house epitomised by the A1 cut 'Six Four Special' with it's dubby stabs and edits and a beautifully spacious breakdown. 'Boneyard' takes a more mid-paced techno route with funky subsonic bassline but sticks to the dubbed out theme. The other two tracks offer more experimental sounds, with 'Dry Riser Inlet' going for sharp snares over dense atmospheric fog and 'Ring Frame Spinning' getting right out there with abstract and disjointed noise bursts. Altogether a diverse and original collection of quality sounds. **AG**

THE TURBOMEN 'Sexy Lady EP' (Peace Feast)
Slow paced sexy house from Bristol duo The Turbomen. Clean crisp percussion combine with whispered 'sexy lady' vocals and a hint of electro in standard, bonus beats and accapella format, plus a forth track 'Work That Sucker' - a more upbeat Chicago-inspired number featuring a cool acid line and more of the aforementioned electro influence. All in all a cool package of hip house that proves you don't have to be banging to cut it. **M**

MR G 'G Beatz Vol 1' (Phoenix G)
Yet more faultless and instantly ear-grabbing house loopery from the man who seems to be able to do no wrong. Strong drum grooves are the order of the day on this release, with Colin McBean giving a disco edge to one and a more Latin feel to the other. As usual the subtle progression keeps the tracks building without drawing attention to the fact. Two top quality house tools that continue to set the standard for others to mimic and steal. **AG**

SAMUEL L SESSION 'A Bastards Work Is Never Done Remixes' (Phont)
Deetron, Steve Bicknell and Samuel himself get to work remixing last years highly rated Phont 11 for some tasty funky percussive loopery. The man from Lost pays detailed attention to creating an atmospheric mid to top space at the expense of dancefloor dynamics, Sessions mimics an earlier Deetron track with 'that' sustained bass sound and Deetron himself comes up with what will probably become the definitive mix of the track with the powerful 'Playmate rework'. **AG**

<RECOMMENDED>
INTERCOURSE 'Lost' (Plastic City Suburbia)
Both the 'Loud Sub' mix and the 'Dark Dub' mix (Get Fucked's Nils Hess & Smart Alex's Dave Coker) lay down dark pulsing bass heavy grooves, the former with spooky female vocals and bottomless sub bass. This record is bound to be moving dancefloors across the land. **B**

BRYAN ZENTZ 'The Crawl EP' (Primate)
The ever-prolific Bryan Zentz returns with some more techno treats guaranteed to work funkier floors. Pick of the bunch is 'The Crawl', which winds a huge modulating bassline through fat stabs and firm percussion with devastating effect. On the flip 'Melange' whips up a fierce rhythmic storm whilst 'Upstart' takes a housier direction but struggles to maintain interest. **DG**

>RECOMMENDED<
UK GOLD 'In The Shade' (Primevil)
Man of the moment Chris McCormack slips into his playful UK Gold guise for another funk-filled outing on the tech 'ause tip. 'In The Shade' is a jazz-fuelled drum workout in fine summery style, whilst the two mixes of 'Confined' on the flip take a sweatier tribal slant maintaining interesting and dynamic percussion and a good sense of urgency. **FJ**

BLIMP 'Equip EP' (Pro-Jex)
Melbourne producer, Shaun Green has already had a great deal of success with a glittering live career and three albums to his name. Now on Pro-Jex he does the jackin' business with this excellent four tracker. 'Bad Girl' features an attention-grabbing funky bassline over a Rush style vocal with resonant whoops to add velocity to the track -a definite dance floor winner. Elsewhere on the EP we see the same formula worked into more frivolous tunes that slide effortlessly between twee, deep and grinding to keep up the element of surprise. A sure sign of live experience if ever there was one. **AG**

DIGITAL PRIMATE 'Playing For The Ladies EP' (Pro-Jex)
Four different mixes here, all staying faithful to the Pro-Jex jackin' sound. The EP kicks off with the best of the four - a medium-paced 909 driven cut with a big funky bassline that twists and turns to great effect. Next up 'The Song' is basically the same with the addition of a heavily effected vocoder vocal dedicated to the ladies of the title. Flip over for the two guest remixes; Justin Berkovi turns in a deeper, more minimal version and Organ Grinder a much slower, dirtier mix - both of which are interesting but lack the dancefloor fuel of the originals. **M**

MACK THE KNIFE 'Worlds Best B-Boy Beats Vol.1' (Radio)
To my mind Freddy Fresh has produced a lot of average releases but has also had moments of pure genius - and this ultra cool 7" is one of them. Side A is basically a collection of old skool loops cut up and edited together. Sounds simple but Mr Fresh does such a great job it stands way above the rest of the sample based/battle disc cuts in circulation and leaves you searching for those original releases in order to hear more. The B-side will also be of interest to Freddy's fans as it contains ten lock grooves typical of his more usual sound. **M**

AIRFROG 'Boun Voyage remixes' (R&S)
Second remix release for Svek records' Boun Voyage, this time courtesy of the Swag boys and Stacey Pullen. The Swag mix is a deep affair with good percussive progression, a cool breakdown and a killer bottom end that should find favour amongst deep house jocks. Stacey Pullen's submission is typically more Detroit flavoured, reminiscent of many of the original Detroit classics and bound to find appeal among the wider house fraternity. **M**

DANO & HALO 'Cloud City Feat. Niara' (Red Melon)
West Coast talents Dano and Halo (California not Cornwall, by the way) re-work Prophets of Sound's 'Show Me Love' accapella into a fairly lacklustre deep house plodder with some nasty horn bursts to boot. 'Divebomb' on the flip shows more promise with the pair's more usual full production and a blissful, stabbing synth riff slowly rising through the mix. Nothing outstanding but all carefully produced and inoffensive. **AG**

MAKATON 'Jukha' (Rodz-Konez)
Four more cuts of challenging ultra-minimalism with that dark Brummy sound throughout. The highlight has to be 'Teamcolours' with its cut up of a technical vocal demo over a characteristic metallic groove and muted synth loop. Also featured is a Regis mix of 'Weakness' with dark, almost Vangelis-like tones and crackles over a stout metallic groove. No-one sounds quite like Makaton and this is one of his best releases to date. **AG**

MAKATON 'Mak 6' (Rodz-Konez)
A finely manufactured batch of brutal techno loops from West London bod Steve 'Makaton' Bailey. Although very much in the style of fellow Ealing-ite Oliver Ho, all three head for the darkest reaches of the dancefloor and are dark, twisted and perfectly executed DJ tools. B2 is the most dynamic and memorable with its cunning edits and mournful underpinning tones, but the lengthy cut on the A-side will hypnotise the crowds when suitably applied. **DG**

ALENIA 'Systems' (Rotation)
Seemingly, all systems are go with Alenia's searing debut performance on Dave Angel's Rotation imprint. The A-side will find favour with harder-edged DJs who like their grooves slick and tough, the Slovenian producer obviously having taken good heed of his fellow countryman Umek's rapidly-rolling fusion of bass and percussion. The B-side is not to be ignored either, with 'Siskebab's electronic undulations through a tough house workout. **GW**

BRYAN ZENTZ 'All Terrain Versions' (Rotation)
In keeping with the title, man of the moment, Bryan Zentz delivers an array of dancefloor tools ranging from the classic, funky tech'ouse sound of Rotation, through synthy Detroit flavours to darker percussive techno. Those familiar with the name will no doubt be very familiar with the sound throughout. The real surprise is the more quirky and 90's sounding 'Sierra' that will easily build floor pressure with its semi-comic synth riff, frantic snares and endless building tension. A little gem of at least semi-precious proportions. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
ARAMCHEK 'Benacassim EP' (Rotter's Golf Club)
From Chicago via San Francisco, the sound of Aramchek perfectly suits the newly launched RGC label from Andrew Weatherall and Keith Tenniswood. Glitched and quirked-out techno is about as close to a succinct description as can be offered, the stand out cut being the A-side 'Benicassim', with its pounding off-kilter (2-step?) techno rhythm, breaking down into a dreamy, Latino-festival chant. A truly original and strangely infectious headfuck of a tune. **GW**

SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES

RADIOACTIVE MAN 'Uranium EP' (Rotters Golf Club)
Pined after by breakbeat and electro nuts for years now, mainly for the girder-funk romp that is 'Uranium' - a track that's been around for some time. A tight, rolling break, slightly melancholic chords and gargantuan B-line combine into one of the most solid breakbeat-electro cuts you may ever hear, while elsewhere the tempo is pitched up and sounds tweaked out in a more experimental vein. Many of you might be found peeping out from beneath your duvets, but clearly Keith Tenniswood has never been afraid of the dark. **GW**

ROBERT MILES 'Paths' (S:alt)
I find it very hard to say this but, this is pretty good. Miles surely still has a lot to answer for unleashing 'Children' on the public, but I guess he can't be held responsible for the barrage of euro-droll it inspired. So the new direction seems to be thoughtful, edging into innovative, torch-song darkness. If you hear it on daytime radio then you'll probably agree we can begin to forgive Miles for his previous crimes against humanity. **EB**

ROBERT MILES 'Paths - RM Salted Remix' (S:alt)
Yes that's right. It's the man responsible for many a piano led tragedy but don't judge just yet. This release features a fucked up tech-breaks mix of 'Paths' with gut wrenching bass drops and acid fuelled breaks twisting around Nina Miranda's haunting vocal. On the B-side 'Bhairav' shows a mellower side with Amelia Cuni (the first westerner to sing in the Dhrupad style) chanting a celebration of the sunrise over drones and bass percussion to highly mesmerising effect. Maybe he's not just the Richard Clayderman of the midi generation. **AG**

SILICON SCALLY 'The Silent Years' (Satamile)
New electro offerings from Carl Finlow AKA Silicon Scally. All three combine ultra deep and futuristic atmospherics with a clean-cut and highly polished minimal groove, very much in the Weatherall School of Electro/electronics. Standout for me is the title track 'The Silent Years', which starts of with the crispest of two step rhythms before adding ghostly melodic synths that take things even deeper than the previous two cuts. **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
UNIT MOEBIUS 'Six Tracker' (ShitCluster)
They have always been well known for making dirty, industrial, lo-fi techno, but after two fairly fractious albums (even by their standards) on Cross Fade Entertainment, this six tracker is generally less industrial and more accessible. There are a couple of short toytown things on here but the two main tracks are just too funky for words. Featuring their trademark heady, complex rhythms with indistinct vocal samples and backwards effects, this is dark, skulking dancefloor heaven. You even get an A3 track that is more typical of their old 'pots and pans' Bunker style. Essential stuff. **MH**

BIG CHIEF ELECTRIC 'Halbschwarzer Schnitt' (Shot)
Three remixes of a dry, flat and highly minimal tune with a snaking 303 line. One goes for a clicky and dub-tinged Chain Reaction-ish effort, and another puts disconcerting ambience over a stark 4/4 beat but includes too many xylophone noises. My favourite mix is the B2, which is still fairly rigidly 4/4 but is a little bit cheeky and defiant, dropping in and out at all the right moments, maintaining a mischievous funk all the way through. Not the greatest record in the world but worth checking for the B2 track. **MH**

VERBOS 'White Enamel' (Simple Answer)
With well-received releases across a plethora of labels such as Planet Rhythm and Kne' Deep, Mark Verbos returns to his own stable for this dark and gritty slab of dancefloor destruction. Going for heavy distortion throughout, he explores a terrain somewhere between the squeaks and wibbles of mid 90's West Coast techno and the more driving, bass heavy euro sound to come up trumps with three individual, quirky, yet highly useable tracks that show a slightly psychotic side to his productions. **AG**

SHIT & CHEAP 'Tits & Wheels' (Scandinavia)
Coarse bass-scapes are looming out of the speakers making the cones quiver like sumos on speed. Ah, it's noise farmers Neil Landstrumm and Trash Records boss Mat Consume cementing their working relationship with four filthy lo-fi slabs of feedback funk, each pebble-dashed with sloppy percussion and muddied vocals for your pleasure. Fave is the attractively titled 'Transvestite Crack Whore' which wobbles the beats out over some pretty severe subbase, but 'Megabitch', 'Cap 'n Arse' and 'Sucking Cocks For Fishheads' all have that extra special something. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
HARDCELL 'Morning Hours' (Skunk Works)
Providing their second double-pack for Skunk Works, Hardcell do the deep and pumping business with six tracks of effective techno loopery and remixes from Max Duley and Olga & Josef. This collection is at its best with needle-shakin, sub-heavy grooves like 'Tonality', 'Echoing' and 'Waking'. Though slightly led down by some lazy string action, the rest of the set also packs quite a punch - although the almost identical nature of Olga & Josefs mix of 'Tonality' makes it a bit of an unnecessary space filler. But with four good quality cuts and three absolute belters, this has got to be one of the best value club techno buys of the summer. **AG**

SD GROOVES 'Deep Flight EP' (Slide)
Rising Irish producer Richard Fox drops his second EP with Gavin Wilson under their SD Grooves guise, and it's another winner. Three tracks of solid, atmospheric bass driven house muzak that ably continue Slide's Soma-esque agenda with plenty more butt shakin' beats. Personal fave is 'Red Leather', an altogether funkier workout infused with soaring synth stabs and conga party action, but there's not a duffer in sight. Check. **VS**

X-FUNK 'Voyager EP' (Soma)
An effective enough collaboration between Percy X and Funk D'Void. The title track is an uplifting loop track that builds cleanly but fails to really take off. On the flip 'Lets Go Back' provides a more interesting take on electronic tribalism, employing bubbling acid lines and low vocal samples to create a slight air of tension, whilst 'Breaking Out' ably explores the chilled electro angle by adding serene Aphex-esque atmospherics to the sparse framework of beats. **FJ**

V/A 'Deck Shark Series 3' (Speaker Attack)
The third 'Deck Shark' collection carries Speaker Attack's global groove ethos ever onwards enlisting eight far-flung acts from the current pool of techno producers. With established names ably joining relative unknowns, there's plenty to please DJs foraging for functional club workouts. Particularly worth checking are the deeper, more structured offerings from Rino Cerrone and newcomer Chris Doria, a hard-hitting contribution from Japan's Chester Beatty and altogether funkier cuts from Indigo Kennedy and Joel Pons. Loops for the troops, but plenty for both feet and floor. **VS**

ZANK 'Nasdaq EP' (Speaker Attack)
Four straight up club tracks from the Japanese loop maestro, focusing on the hip swinging percussion that techno DJs have come to love from this man. Standout is the attention grabbing Rush-style stomp of 'Game Over' with it's sparse jackin' kick, bursts of phased ride cymbal and "Gay, gay, gay, game over" vocal. Nothing particularly clever, but boy does it work. **TH**

>RECOMMENDED<
LAURENT BRONDEL 'Parallel World EP' (Statra US)
Having read that stateside producer Laurent Brondel has no approach to music making other than to make it 'dark and long', it was no surprise to find the original version of this track highly reminiscent of the Underworld track of the same name. Then I realised it was on the wrong speed. Opps. On the right speed however, it is pretty indescribable. Softly-spoken strings and beats, dub bass and vocodered vocals all come together in a downbeat electro-ish format to fabricate a unique and timeless composition, accompanied here by a driving four to the floor 'Gravity Mix' and two new doobies for the more discerning electronicist - the beatless bliss of 'Nothing Is Quite True' and the spaced-out old skool breaks of 'Restless'. The 4/4 mix lacks funk, but the other three tracks are true class. **FJ**

VOID, SANTIAGO AND BURNS 'The Crowd Seemed To...' (Stompaphunk)
There's been much talk of techno crossing over into the mainstream this summer, and this is probably what it will sound like when it does - clean basslines, punchy house kicks and dreamy bursts of atmospheric hits and keys. Despite featuring four mixes of the same track, all pulsate with that unique brand of Stompa funk. Favourite has to be the original mix with it's growling acid bassline and robotic vocals. No doubt this has them jumping around in Brighton already. **AG**

DJ SHUFFLEMASTER 'Geylang' (Subvoice)
Four-track club techno offering from Japan's aptly titled DJ Shufflemaster. Unimaginatively titled A1-B2, but who cares when the quality is this high. Other than A1 (a downtempo chill-out track with a distinct oriental feel, or a fast breakbeat track at 45rpm!), all are different mixes of 'Geylang' and all are peak time dancefloor workouts. Very similar to each other and baring more than a passing likeness to Adam Beyer's much-touted Remanipulator remix, especially the A2 mix with its vocal hook. That withstanding, all three are perfect examples of the kind of funky groove Shufflemaster excels. A worthy purchase. **M**

JENGAHEADS 'Caborkebab' (Sud)
Think of a hamster running round in his wheel. The constant rattle and squeak as poor hammy pants away like some poor sod running himself into the ground for the religion of sweatshop sportswear. The hamster has probably got more creative fever going in him than the main track on this release. It's okay really I guess, but just goes on and on in a very small-rodenty kind of way. The Funk D'void track is surprisingly devoid of funk but the Enrico Muzio mix is charming, dropping popgasm synths that'll sound like a big audio-duvet in a club. **EB**

SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES SINGLES

LEANDRO GAMEZ ' No Way To Follow ' (Superbra)
Four effective disco-influenced numbers straight outta of Switzerland take Superbra to its twelfth release. Spaniard Leandro Gamez takes the User /Recycled Loops formula and adds his own rhythmic flair, weaving synth washes and vocal trickery over fairly tight grooves. For more sustained dancefloor appeal however, flip to the dirty funk of B2, resplendent as it is with tougher programming, excellent reverse stabs and nagging vocal. **LM**

>RECOMMENDED<
DISX3 'Art_Of_Function' (Surface)
Suitably dark and driving techno rhythms for Rich Polson's label courtesy of Germany's Alexander Kowalski. Plenty of dancefloor dynamism displayed on all four cuts, although A1 and A2 are particularly punishing. When it comes to dark minimal techno Surface releases have always been a cut above the rest. This release beats ninety percent of contemporary grind hands down. **FJ**

ULTRADYNE VS REDSHIFT 'Unknown (SE 004)' (Surface Effect)
Detroit's Ultradyne (aka Dopplereffekt) teams up with Glasgow's Redshift to produce one fairly forgettable chilled digital electro track and a more twisted experimental affair, both untitled. On the latter, disjointed analogue bass is topped with strained tones and fierce resonant FX stabs to create a nauseating but catchy whole. Also featured, and probably the highlight, is Redshift's own 'Glide', using savagely distorted drums over clean wobbling arpeggios to create some of the best work we've heard from him yet. **AG**

THE RARE LOWRY/ SOUTHEAST CONNECTION 'Takeover' (Takeover)
A new label from Belfast which features 2 artists with different styles. The Rare Lowry contributes a stripped down and monotone drum workout, which is too basic and minimal for my liking. The South East Connection though gives us 2 high quality electro tracks which stand out in the current climate. The title track is a gritty and bleepy affair with a computerised 'Takeover' sample, while 'Discos under my tongue' features lowdown sub bass and an edgy otherworldly feel, only slightly spoiled by an annoying fire alarm noise that comes in late in the track. A good first off release and definitely a label to check out. **MH**

MONIKA KRUSE & VOODOOAMT 'Route 27' (Terminal M)
Ex-Harthouse hero Patrick Lindsey joins forces with the up-and-coming Ms Kruse on this taster for their forthcoming LP. Here they present a grinding Euro synth-led track that builds around a three-note melody to reach epic proportions - together with a remix by Thomas Schumacher, adding more synth noodling but otherwise sticking to the original formula. A catchy little ditty of a techno track that should prove a big success on trancier dancefloors. **AG**

<RECOMMENDED>
GORODISCH 'Thurn & Taxis' (The Leaf Label)
Inspired by Thomas Pynchon's 'The Crying of Lot 49' (thank god it wasn't 'Gravity's Rainbow') this is like running round a friend's garden at night when you were 7 - a kind of 'not there' appeal lies in its folksy sample-tapestry. Stephen Cracknell has a good musical pedigree and can clearly play his instruments, but the best thing about it all is that the music works. It sounds like it won't, but it does - and that's a brave path to tread. **EB**

GRANDABOB 'Mudwiggle' (Toko)
While claiming to produce their twisted funk on two Dancette record players and a hearing trumpet in the catheter room of an old peoples home, this trio have taken the rest of the genre by the horns and given it a firm dose of purpose to chew on. Despite some often-bizarre antics, their tunes never fail to get booty wigglin'. Their two tracks featured here are fine examples of their craft and will cause as much jollity as they will danceability. Unfortunately the Si Brad mix is less exciting - if not mind numbingly predictable, but with the level of fucked up quality oozing out of the A-side you hardly have any right to complain. **AG**

CLUBBERS INTERNATIONAL 'I Love Clubbers' (Tommy Boy)
Don't we all love clubbers? Apart from the sort who would dance to this. They're not clubbers. They've just ended up in a nasty city bar that plays REALLY loud house music and they're enjoying loosening their ties, getting really shit-faced and groping pretty much anything everywhere. **EB**

VICTOR CLADERONE FEAT. DEBORAH COOPER 'Are You Satisfied' (Tommy Boy)
Sweet Jesus. This practically rips the walls down when it starts. But it's not long before this disco trance stomper effortlessly becomes a load of cack. About 0.5 of a second, I'd say. You may say sooner. Am I satisfied? Pressing eject never felt so good. **EB**

BAM BAM 'Where's Your Child' (Tresor)
Number two in the Archive series from Tresor and this time it's the turn of the Chicago acid sound of Chris Westbrook with his classic "Where's Your Child" - a track that introduced darkness to many a dance floor with it's menacing vocal and dirty 303. Also featured is the less well known but equally saucy "Give It To Me" and an appalling remix of "Where's Your Child" by DJ Rush who, almost unbelievably, takes all the menace out of the tune. Although they released a Westbrook retrospective in 1995 it does seem strange that Tresor should include this in their archives though. **AG**

BEN SIMS 'Dubs 2' (Tresor)
The London loop guru debuts for Tresor, and as you'd expect from the artist and title there's plenty here for DJ manipulation though not a great deal to please the home listener, making for perhaps not the most memorable inaugural outing. Three lengthy cuts of shaky top-end percussion and tonal pulses over muddy bass-fulled grooves - all executed in his unmistake-able cyclic style with plucky enough production to warrant attention from skilled deck-ticians. **DJ**

NEIL LANDSTRUMM 'Glamourama EP' (Tresor)
Edinburgh's favourite experimental son returns from a two-year sabbatical in the urban wilds of Brooklyn. His self-imposed immersion into the New York culture that he so admires has stamped itself onto his sound with the crunching electro beats that trawl through the muddy electronic funk of all four tracks on this EP, his first release since 1998. Landstrumm's production technique may be a little strange to some (apparently making the majority of his tracks on software alone), yet he manages to inject a fuzzy wash of melody and energy through the multi-layered synths and drums of tracks like 'The Tokyo Assassin', whilst retaining the abstract musical edge that he is known for. Welcome back. **GW**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Sirius Is A Freund EP' (Tresor)
Marking a decade of releasing top quality techno, Berlin's Tresor label celebrate by releasing an EP containing three delicious rarities from the darkened recesses of their back catalogue. The famous "Sirius " compilation of 1995 has been revived to initiate the new 'Archiv' series, kicking off with rare tracks from three of Tresor's finest artists. Brighton's Cristian Vogel chips in with the abrasive, stuttering electronic jam "Ninjah", sharing the B-side with Daniel Bell's characteristically minimal mind-bending bleepfest "Acid Phreak". Best of all, however, is the first 'vinyl appearance' of Model 500's 'Light Speed', a seven-minute celestial jam of deep, moving Detroit techno - Juan Atkins at the top of his game. **GW**

BUCK 'Lovin' Haight' (Tweakin' Records)
Bongos - been done before, but I like them anyway. Add a fat kick-drum and dubby bass-line and you have an instant groove. However, a record cannot survive on groove alone and it's this point that's been overlooked. Even the spacey tinkles and girlie wails fail to keep your hips swivelling, which results in a fairly average record. It is let down further by the fact that three of the four tracks are variations on this theme. Strange then, that the final track 'An ode to Mad Marj' is by far the best, 'French Kiss' like groans providing a groove with sex appeal. Overall, average at best. **FB**

MARK HAWKINS 'Foot In Mouth EP' (Ugly Funk)
Pure unadulterated ugly funk from Nottingham based Mark Hawkins, who currently has EPs doing the rounds on Djax, Pro-Jex and Automatic. The first release on this new London-based label typifies his angry style of raw machine music over the space of four tracks. On the A-side 'Ugly Funk' is fierce 4/4 of the stripped-down and spiky variety whilst 'Defrag' is a totally out-of-it bass and bleep symphony. Flip over and 'Mcotinell' opts for more killer drum crunching whilst 'Hovel Living' kicks out abstract elastic beats over undulating samples and drum roll mania. There are few producers out there hitting on this sound as effectively as this guy. **DG**

HARVEY LANE 'Dusky Maidens' (Veto)
The second release on his new label, Harvey Lane serves up a dirty blend of pitched down kicks and distorted, complex percussion with handy DJ friendly edits to produce a brooding brummy monster on the aptly title 'Sinister Footwear'. Elsewhere on the EP things are equally dark but based more on crunchy drum stomps with an underpinning of white noise and disjointed editing to give a fresh twist on the Birmingham sound. Not for the faint hearted but a sure glimpse into urban decay if ever there was one. **AG**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/VM 'Help Aphex Twin' (V/VM Test Records)
Spread over two 3" CDs the release is kind old V/VM's way of trying to raise some support for the Aphex Twin, whom it is felt simply isn't in the public eye enough. For those who have yet to encounter the delights of V/VM, the format goes like this:
1, Take a well known hit, respected or cheesy. 2, Mangle and butcher the said hit through all manner of filters, effects, etc. 3, Add as much irony as possible. 4, Using thinly veiled aliases with humorous play on words song titles, release the hacked-up versions care of a unique VVMCPS copyright system (i.e. only release a limited number through specialist outlets and pray you get away with it). These releases follow this formula to glorious excess, treating most of the Twin's recent big hits to full V/VM treatment, managing to make Aphex Twin sound even weirder and 'Come To Daddy' even scarier. If you can find 'em buy 'em, and don't worry about reprisals, apparently Mr R. James has given his full approval. **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
SQUAREPUSHER 'My Red Hot Car' (Warp)
Another awesome release from Tom Jenkinson - who seems to have a knack of absorbing current musical styles and then regurgitating them into something that is uniquely Squarepusher. Both mixes of 'My Red Hot Car' have a distinct two step, downtempo feel, the second mix differing in that the vocals and percussions twist and turn at an alarming rate due to extreme filtering action. The B-side features two versions of 'Obelisk' with the first pure tonal ambiance reminiscent of the compositions of Ligeti and the second a more typical drill and bass cut that's just as imaginative and inventive as the title tracks. **M**

CHROMATIX 'Multiplayer EP' (World Electric)
Germany's World Electric electro label reaches double figures with four well-produced tracks from New York's Cromatix. Both A-side tracks, 'Assembler' and 'Pitch Control' pulsate with life as they twist and turn along electro highways, plotting a deep electronic sci-fi course. The B-side cuts, 'Force Feedback' and 'Spoorweg', follow a similarly inspired bleep and bass plan but are more abstract in their execution. A quality release from a label well worth searching for. **M**

SCHMOOV 'Monkey Nut' (Yoga)
This new deep house label from Nottingham has a lot to live up to, and it's quite possible judging by this first release that they're going to pull it off. First up "Monkey Nut" is a classy slice of disco-soaked funk while "Break it down" is a chilled out vocal groover with a nod towards more recent DiY or Mantis releases. **B**

JOHAN BACTO 'Hertz Hunter' (Zync)
Johan Bacto's original mix is a lengthy percussive techno groove featuring loads of Latin percussion and the odd stab for punctuation - effective enough DJ fare. The Redhead mix however reveals far greater production vision as it delivers a more floor friendly and fuller sound with a simple but effective four note melody playing in the backgound and some tasty, stuttering fills. **AG**

ALBUMS

MILLSART 'Every Dog Has Its Day' (Axis / Music Man)
Jeff Mills finally releases a CD compilation of his two very scarce Axis double packs for those who missed them first time round or who could not afford the exorbitant prices slapped on them. A departure from his normal Purposemaker or Axis sound, these tracks are of a slower tempo and the focus is more on melody than usual. Mills offers up emotive, string-led tracks with languid cymbal crashes and organic basslines, achieving a richer, textured sound that is soothing and almost dreamlike. These tracks stand together as a cohesive collection that can be listened to from start to finish, but I can't help feeling that they would be better off on vinyl so they could be mixed up and played around with. Never mind though, the fact they are available again is a good thing and this is well worth having. Mills has his fair share of 'days' and this is another one to chalk up. **MH**

TOM SILVESTER 'Deep & Wide' (Beau Monde)
Having previous appeared on R & S and Luke Solomon's Music For Freaks, South London's Tom Silvester turns out a dub-fuelled debut album for Beau Monde that, alongside the current upsurge in deep atmospheric house grooves from Germany should be received well enough in the current climate. It's easy to draw sound comparison with some of today's top deep housers; 'Spin' is a heady sleazy groove reminiscent of Grayhound material, 'Strange Matter' could be likened to Herbert on one of his less off-beat forays, whilst 'Remember Me' opts (regrettably) for Daft Punk filter disco style. At times it's all a little too loungecore to really stir dancing feet, with many of the less floor orientated numbers drifting off into odd atmospherics that seem slightly misplaced. However, the general feeling of downbeat low-slung funk should win an enthusiastic response from those who like their house clean and a little moody. **FJ**

SPACEHEADS & MAX EASTLEY 'The time of the Astronaut' (Bip Hop)
This is coooool. Like the soundtrack to a whodunnit set in outer space. Looping plaintive, haunting trumpet sounds glide in and out of what pseuds would describe as a shifting electronic soundscape. I particularly liked the opening track (no title) which sounds like a funeral march for a trumpeter that died tragically in battle. Interesting fact - Spaceheads trumpeter Andy Diagram also plays in vegan-rock stalwarts James. Don't be frightened though, this is much better. **PO**

V/A 'Bip-Hop Generation' (Bip-Hop)
International showcase of experimental electronica, eh? But don't let that put you off - this is an impressive and emotive collection (think UR's 'Final Frontier', or Boards of Canada's 'Pete Standing Alone'). Arovane's tunes have the same fuzzy fragility of Ambient Works Vol.1-era Aphex Twin, Bernhard Fleischmann's pensive riff in 'Aube' makes me want to sleeeep, mmmm yes, forever, but then Warmdesk broils the synapses with the pensive alien beebop of 'Encaustic'. Brilliant value, and useful sleevenotes for checking out earlier works. **PO**

>RECOMMENDED<
FOUR TET 'Pause' (Domino)
Some of the titles would lead you to think that Four Tet wasn't particularly fussed about trying to break new musical ground; 'Leila Came Round And We Watched A Video' and 'Everything Is Alright' don't exactly shout 'tormented artistic soul' at you. Still, sarcasm is an unjust reward for such an honest musical approach. 'Pause' is a lovely album - organic trip hop that delves into bric-a-brac audio and comes out shining like oriental sunbeams. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
FUNCKARMA 'Solid State' (DUB Recordings)
Cranking out the broken scatterbeats in the same glitch-ridden vein as their recent 'EP 4' for Holland's excellent DUB imprint, brothers Don and Roel Funcken are set to charm the pants off electronica buffs with this seventy-four-minute fusion of twisted downbeat melodies and polyrhythmic interference. 'Solid State', the duo's second long-player, parades an altogether looser build than its predecessor 'Parts', developing an increasingly live feel as displayed by tracks such as 'Blex' and 'Zena', where jazz-flavoured percussion parts pan and splutter amidst a sea of dubwise effects and serene tonal interplay. Occasional human injection (emotive vocals from Oksea Lijaks and violin parts played by Mar Tenas I Bastida) helps lend a rich organic edge to the heavy wash of synthetics, whilst there's plenty of precision programming afoot to please beatfreaks in the form of mind-boggling edits and mutant junglist drum patterns. 'Solid State' is a breath-taking voyage into the outer limits of electronics, and with so much variation in structure over these ten lengthy compositions there will constantly be new treasures for the listener to embrace. **FJ**

GADGETS 'Live' (Elp)
An hour-long live minimal techno set may not sound promising, but this is a warm and well-built performance. Flat-sounding moments where the bassline starts going PONKPONK are mercifully few, and the sonic drone linking tracks is always drowned out by the whooping crowds. Track five (no title) has a tasty clipped groove and Bicknell-styled filtered drum loops but ends a bit quickly. No matter - they crank it hard for the remainder. Ten out of ten for rocking the party - the crowd love it. **PO**

>RECOMMENDED<
ADULT. 'Resuscitation' (Ersatz Audio)
The electro world's fascination with the 80s continues apace and this debut long player from Ersatz Audio duo, Adult.. (the full stop is intentional and apparently meaningful). To classify this release as an '80s homage album' would be woefully wrong. 'Resuscitation' combines the disposable pop of the eighties with a very contempory lo-fi techno sound and Kraftwerk-esque primitive vocals, resulting in a highly infectious and fresh sound. Similar to Dopplereffek and Drexciya yet unique due to Nicola Kuperus' distinctive sing-a-long vocals. The album collects much sought after releases from Adult.'s two-year history, adding to them with exclusive mixes and recordings. Particularly noteworthy are 'Hand to Phone,' 'Nausea' and the awesome 'Contagious.' Highly recommended pop music for the techno generation. **M**

SMART ALEX 'Straight A's' (Eukahouse)
Who's that? Uh... sorry, you've caught me napping. Oh dear, I appear to have drooled and everything. I don't know what happened. One minute I was listening to this new album of tech house music from Smart Alex - and then I must've just drifted off. I think it must have been, ooh... about one minute into the first song I guess. I'd better put it back on. That's better. Now, here we go. The new album from Smart Alex called 'Straight ...A's' ...is. is. Zzzzzzzz. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Exist' (Exist)
Intended by its creator Oliver Ho as a broad-reaching multimedia project taking in exhibitions, live performances etc, the first part is in the form of a compilation CD. Not very avant-garde you may think, but don't be fooled by the format. This is a challenging, varied and accomplished collection of rich electronic experimentation. With tracks from Ho himself, Tony Child, Mick Harris, Steve Bicknell, Max Duley, Karl O'Connor, Claude Young, Fumiya Tanaka and James Ruskin, it's a high profile spread, with each artist creating a highly unique tonal vision the arena of ultra specialist electronic sound. All apart from Karl O'Connor, who balances the alien resonance by employing a chugging punk riff for some gnarly lo-fi sub-pop action. **AG**

V/A '21st Century Ska' (Free Radical Sound Recordings)
There was a time not so many years ago that you couldn't move for Ska based sound systems, live acts and labels. The likes of Cloak and Dagger and Lion Rock flourished, and stoned wasters found new life in the good times jump up sound. Well those days are back once more with the release of this compilation from Free Radical, with 14 fresh tracks of skanking grin'n'dance music inspired by the Ska and Two Tone sounds. Featured are the likes of the aforementioned Lion Rock, Rumblefish, Madness's horn arranger Terry Edwards, The Woodshed (favourites of the original wave) and Holland's Skankaround Soundsystem. Apart from the Woodshed offering all tracks take up the story where the scene left off but offer a myriad of opportunities to forget the serious business of modern electronic music and let go to some infectious fun party music. **AG**

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ROGER VAN LUNTEREN 'Tmaeins' (Heimelektro Ulm)
'Tmaeins' - Roger Van Lunteren's debut, is a brilliant piece of 'listening' music. Full of feeling and expertly produced, it's easy to see why he has previously been so highly acclaimed. The music covers a range of styles varying between dark 'Aphex' breaks and uplifting, analogue chord progressions. There are only five tracks on the album, but each is in itself a mini epic portraying a whole range of musical emotions. It sounds a bit like 'Nuphonic' for want of a better description. It's intelligent, it's different and if you're into subtle electronica, it's ruff! **FB**

V/A Border Crossing (Immigrant)
The theme of travel is omnipresent here as label boss Robin Porter is an ex-Brit who has moved to Southern California. He has also tried to put out music that transcends both barriers and borders whilst maintaining the quality of output. He has attained these goals, as there is a wide variety of material here from the bubbling house of Lance De Sardi to the punchy techno of Maetrik. Highlights are Paul Mac's 'Another Chain in the Link', which is low, throbbing tech crossed with German click-haus, John Tejada and Arian Leviste's bleepy and juddery number that has got that distinctly old school British techno sound, and Robin Porter's 'Father Nature' with its warm, fat bass, thoughtful keys and distant voices. My only gripes would be that maybe these tracks might have benefited from being mixed together and that one or two out of eleven don't really have the ideas to justify their length. Overall though a very worthy round up of a quality deep house label. **MH**

>RECOMMENDED<
FISCHERSPOONER 'No 1' (International Deejay Gigolos)
'No 1' is the debut album from New York artist collective headed by Warren Fischer and Casey Spooner. Abandoning the 'stifling and inbred' avant-garde art scene in pursuit of 'indulgent fun' Fischerspooner are apparently something of a sensation amongst the New York 'in crowd' and this hugely impressive release can serve only to increase their standing further a field. Very much at home on DJ Hell's impressive International Deejay Gigolos imprint 'No1' is perfect pop, easily combining the minimalist explorations of Gary Numan and the perfectionist sound of the Pet Shop Boys with the rawness of today's electro sound and the energy of Duran Duran and many of the seminal 80s bands. Following closely from their well received debut single 'Emerge,' 'No 1' has all the makings of a classic, not just because it's released at a time when the 80s electro pop throw back is at it's height, but due to its sheer beauty and exquisite sense of balance. Might not be heard at many clubs but should be on constant play on home stereos across the world. **M**

V/A 'International DeeJay Gigolo's Vol 5' (International Deejay Gigolo's)
DJ Hell's widely adored label celebrates being so damn popular with a double CD compilation of electro-techno pop. From the first track the drum machines are warmed up and the analogue noises are headed straight for the 1980's, but all with a very modern attitude. Having said that, this is not a narrow-minded collection of music - if all the tracks have one thing in common it's a desire to get the next drink in and back on the dancefloor as soon as possible. And by the time you've reached the end of the second CD and Orlando Voorn's classic 'Flash' comes on, it doesn't matter where you are, you'll be raving like it was Saturday night. **EB**

>RECOMMENDED<
JAPANESE TELECOM 'CD' (Intuit Solar)
Abstract and wholly electronic from the onset, this CD of tracks basically comprises the original vinyl EP plus its following remix release. Much more Yellow Magic Orchestra than Kraftwerk, the album's quirky futuristic take on electro is a delight to listen to, similar to Dopplereffekt and Drexciya at their best, although not as harsh as most Drexciyan releases - and certainly with more of a sense of play about it. None of the original versions stand out - not because they are in the least bit average but because it's the whole sound that is so appealing. The remixes complement this perfectly; Holland's The Men From the Pack turn in an abstract groove punctuated with oriental vocal samples and phone rings whilst John Selway's is more four-four but still as quirky and funk-driven as the originals. **M**

ORIGAMI GALAKTIKA 'Stjternevandring / Eesti Lilled Silmad Suda' (Jester)
A real tongue twister of a title to get stuck into here but unfortunately not a lot else. This double CD from Norway is apparently about friendship but there is not much I can really glean from it. There is not one solid rhythm here, just endless droning soundscapes that don't really go anywhere, some of which last over 30 minutes. Across 2 CD's the tracks did nothing to suck me in and I couldn't really get any frame of reference. All of this is made by one guy, Benny, who is constantly touring and performing this stuff, although to be honest I can't see how this would work live. I guess that is why he likes to perform naked. This is music for flotation tanks. It left me feeling totally cold although I accept that are people who are into this sort of thing. I guess it's the aural equivalent of Marmite, you either love it or you hate it. **MH**

ROTOSCOPE 'Great Curves' (Jester)
Matmos meets Speedranch meets Bjork meets Amon Tobin meets Zappa - all in a live kind of stylee. Yes, it's crazy fucked-up music from somewhere cold in the northern hemisphere. Really fucked-up. You only have to listen to about one minute of this to realise you're going to really love it or dive for the eject. Hailing in fact from Norway, Andreas Mjos here works with producer Jorgen Traeen in remixing his own tracks to apparently prevent you from hearing any of the original songs, which they originally made together with five other fruitloop musicians. Well, they might be talking shit for all we know, but this colossal fusion of singing, sax, interference and drum licks is pretty good in parts. **DG**

ULVER 'Perdition City' (Jester)
Ulver aren't just your ordinary doom-hop mongers. These ex-death metal Norwegianers regard themselves as magicians and make slobbering new-wave electrobeat. I am probably being very ignorant of Ulver's background but it would seem they loved 'Kid A'. So fair enough, I like 'Kid A' and this is actually okay too. But the serious musician attitude that dictates every move in the music means it never really does anything of merit. Such a shame. More death metal I say. **EB**

UKO 'Uko' (Klein)
Occasionally something comes along that reminds you why you love music, and surprise surprise, that refreshing feeling comes courtesy of Klein once more. After releasing the highly rated jazz/dub antics of their 'Superconductive EP', Jurgen and Martin Nussbaum add a range of strings to Uko's bow to bring you one of the freshest LPs to hit the shelves in months. Effortlessly breezing through the downtempo styles of their contemporaries, the pair deliver all with the crispest drum production and laid-back, sampled cool that leaves you wondering how you can get some of that ease into your own life. If you got jolly with Jolly or felt for the life of Seelenluft's 'Silvercity Bob' then get ready for the next chapter in the evolution of the computer's soul. **AG**

V/A 'Transatlantic Lounging Vol 4' (Life Enhancing Audio)
Hmmm. Aromabar's cod-reggae samples will bring a cold sweat to the brow of those still scarred by the dreadful Ace Of Bass; Soulstance's weedy groove is pissed all over by nu-garage knuckleheads Oxide And Neutrino; and Mescalito's 'A Door To Safety' reminds me of everything that is wrong about sampling the flute. The rest of this selection isn't necessarily unattractive or unoriginal, just uninspiring. If records were furniture, this is the sound of MFI. **PO**

BOLZ BOLZ 'Human Race' (Longhaul)
For those who remember the Force Inc output of yesteryear, this is that sound dragged into the 21st century. Bolz Bolz gives us heavy and distorted techno, combined with the kind of pounding acid lines that have been out of vogue for so long. There are a couple of nice mellow tracks on here as well, also in very much the same style. The two versions of the title track are the standouts from the ten on offer here, although there are a couple of other guaranteed floor fillers. Some tracks don't quite hit the mark and end up sounding slightly dated and cheesy but this is well worth it for the three or four great tracks. **MH**

>RECOMMENDED<
ZORN 'The City's Collapsing (But Not Tonight)' (Lux Nigra)
People love to pigeonhole music, inventing genres such as trip-hop, big beat and click-house to simplify and compartmentalise music. It is therefore a genuine pleasure to hear something that is as genuinely fresh and expressive as this. Defying any attempts at easy categorisation, Michael Zorn presents a collection of deep and complex rhythm tracks. Fusing the very best of dub sounds, Detroit styled techno and British electronica, Zorn starts with basic grooves that develop via subtle melodies into deep and intricate rhythmic arrangements. There is no beat trickery for the sake of it though, the tracks are fluid and refined as opposed to jarring, and keep the listener constantly engaged. Tracks build around warm and fuzzy atmospherics, which perfectly complement the expansion of the rhythms. The cool electro beats that are the basis of the album work both the mind and the feet, though I would recommend kicking back and taking this in. Put simply you just have to give this a listen. **MH**

V/A 'No More Rock & Roll' (Make Some Noise/Spiky Records)
Fucked up noise farming for a generation sick of the bland, self-satisfying fashions of the music industry and its constant revivalism. 'No More Rock & Roll answers the question 'Is Rock & Roll dead or alive?' with a veritable barrage of fucked up hip hop, digital hardcore and drill 'n' bass sample abuse. Featuring contributions from the scenes leading lights including the intense gabba fuelled opening title track from Hellfish & Producer, Atari Teenage Riot's immense genre defining 'Digital Hardcore', Mike Paradinas in his Kid Spatula guise warping and filtering a drill and bass/gabba fusion to the extreme, Panic Stepper's industrial strength almost structure less noise offering 'Biter' and Kid 606's splintered digital feedback powerbook assault 'Kidrush' - not to mention a host of other punk/rave fuelled mentalist beat abuse. The sound of the digital underground at it's irreverent, innovative best. **M**

ALBUMS ALBUMS ALBUMS ALBUMS ALBUMS

RUSSELL HASWELL 'Live Salvage 1997-2000' (Mega)
At first listen 'Live Salvage' appears to be little more than random feedback and unstructured white noise, the sort of effect you'd accidentally get if you played a computer program through an audio CD. And there's no denying it, 'Live Salvage' is certainly noise-based, but amongst the chaotic machine rantings and environmental recordings a sense of balance and grace subtlety evolves. Russell presents himself as a multi-disciplinary Artist, and here he is using generated and found sound as his medium to build industrial soundscapes, all of which were recorded at live performances over the four year period 1997-2000. The resulting collection is the kind of 'cutting edge' electronics that blurs the distinction between art and music. I'd advise you to give it a little listen before you buy it for next mother's day. **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
INIGO KENNEDY 'The Bigger Picture' (Missile)
Missile's first artist LP demonstrates a great bestowing of faith in London's Inigo Kennedy. Kennedy's fascination with the inner workings of technology apparently extends way back into his infancy and such a preoccupation explains the patchwork of electronic frequencies that form the melodic layers of these predominantly minimal dancefloor tech-jams. Yet Kennedy's ability clearly outshines simply producing DJ fodder. Here the minimalism is the result of subtle tweaking and sound forging that allows 'The Bigger Picture' to be an altogether more cerebral experience - the quality evident in the range of moods and mindscapes he has managed to create. Original, versatile and immaculately crafted, Kennedy has produced a techno artist album of high quality, capable of satisfying the demands of both the head and the dancefloor. **GW**

V/A 'Reslab' (Mitek)
Eight tracks of minimal dub-techno from Sweden, produced by Andreas Tilliander, Grecl, Silent Comfort and M.Stavrosand. Grecl contributes four of the eight tracks on here, although his contributions are notably shorter than the others'. The tracks are all minimal and harmonic future dub, creating polished rhythms out of hisses, clicks, keyboard snatches and rounded bass tones. At times hypnotic, at times more sharp and spiky, these artists are always experimenting and the album never disappoints. Mark Sweden down on the map as another hotbed of electronic talent. **MH**

V/A 'Biomolecular Rhythms Vol 3' (Molecular)
Number three in the compilation series sees Marco Lenzi's imprint come up with a little cracker, with tracks from Ho, Duley, Alcock, Indigo Kennedy, Claude Young, Beyer'n'Carola, Ben Sims, Mills and Lenzi himself - four which are previously unreleased, including beauties from Duley and Kennedy. Mr Lenzi also throws in 100 highly useful loops to strengthen the release. Nothing but intelligent, deep and hard-hitting club tracks. **AG**

JUSTIN BERKOVI Transit (Music Man)
'Dark Caress' sounds like an angry washing machine and 'Curves' reverberates with that classic "wobwob" sound that lets you levitate in front of bassbins. It's not until track three though that the groove breaks loose with the clipped whip of 'Inertia' and a slew of hi-hats so clean it's like taking a cold shower. Berkovi must be a tasty live proposition; 'Neck It' slams for a strobe-lit dancepit and 'Adult Playground' is dalek disco with a killer kickdrum. A good album, although a little cold on first listen. **PO**

>RECOMMENDED<
CHERRY BOMB 'Live' (Music Man)
Oh, Tech-house! That much maligned and misunderstood 'genre', with its silly name that has had numerous cheesemongers clinging desperately onto the bandwagon heading all the way to San Francisco, via Fabric... Tape Delay is the new Arpeggio! But it's all just house and techno really, innit? I defy anyone, however, to fuck with the hypnotic, electronic territory that grooves at a house tempo while retaining a techy edge, when it's done as well as this. Richard Brown aka Cherry Bomb has a fair bit of experience in crafting delightfully headwrecking music, what with his apprenticeship at Warp and partnership with Chris Duckenfield as Swag. This live mix, recorded at Remedy in his home town of Sheffield, is a virtuoso performance of bleeps, effects, and twisted digital mind-wronging, all four-to-the-flawed by the live factor - including mistakes, we are told. Picture a man bent over a console manipulating the knobs and sliders of an analogue control panel that is hard-wired to your drug-addled brain...Encounter him on the dancefloor at the right moment, and this man will mash your head into tiny little squares. **GW**

MARCIN CZUBALA 'Dope' (Neue Heimat)
Lively and well-produced selection of techno/electro from a talented Polish producer also responsible for releases on Automatic and his own Currently Processing imprint. Germany's Neue Heimat is proving to be an essential outlet for fierce machine funk from the Brighton / Edinburgh School of Strange Groove - a reputation valiantly upheld by this hard-hitting double pack of bass-heavy future groovers. 'Dope' isn't nearly as unhinged as Landstrumm, Glencross and the like yet brings in plenty of different influences to tackle the dancefloor. The finely titled 'Oh Shit, I Do Need A Cig' crosses darkly into the funky loop terrain, 'Domestic Violence' kicks out atmospheric electro beats over deep sub-bass and penetrating stabs, 'De La Soul' is pure sleazy disco sludge, and tracks such as 'Under A Groove' and 'Hotline' kick out the freaky frequencies and snappy percussion with plenty of funk 'n grind. Czubala's finest statement of intent yet - this deserves to see plenty of spin time from more adventurous techno jocks. **FJ**

V/A 'Carl Craig Presents: Abstract Funk Theory' (Obsessive)
The new most famous person in techno selects a manifesto of tracks ranging from classic Detroit cuts to Prince and The B-52s. The general message is swooping machine grooving and you won't be able to resist the strong funk agenda from the likes of Rhythm is Rhythm's 'The Dance', Model 500's 'Night Drive' and Craig's own somber track as BFC, 'Galaxy'. **EB**

V/A 'Ian O'Brien & Kirk Degiorgio: Soul Of Science 2' (Obsessive)
Despite the overly noodlesome opening "jazz" tracks which last approx. two weeks, this album is a real treasure for anyone who likes their funk fresh and fried. Harold McKinney's 'In The Moog' is keyboard mentalism, Azymuth's 'Pela Cidade' is classic 70s snogging music, and 'Silver Apples' Love Fingers' is Arthur Lee's vocal urgency over the tastiest, loosest breakbeat drummer I've heard for ages. Each track is a highlight, but just wait for Kaidi Taitham's 'Betcha', which must have Sign O' The Times-era Prince retching with jealousy. **PO**

>RECOMMENDED<
SLAG BOOM VAN LOON 'So Soon' (Planet Mu)
A mighty spread of talent adorns this remix project of last year's Speedy J and Mike Paradinas collaboration, and although the overall result isn't somehow quite as gob smacking as you'd expect from a collection featuring among others, Boards Of Canada, Pole, Four Tet, Matmos, Coil, Tipper and Paradinas himself, the majority of this round-the-twist electronica is well worth a listen. The two BOC contributions - 'Poppy Seed' and 'Poppy Seed (Reprise)' - are pleasant enough, but the real highlights however include atmospherically programmed breaks from Tipper, dubbed-out 22nd century jazz from Matmos and, as the press release so wonderfully puts it, another reliable impression of King Tubby frying sausages from Stefan 'Pole' Betke. Strictly limted to 2,000 for the whole world, you could do much worse that to track this album down. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
CHRIS MCCORMACK 'There Are Better Ways' (Potential)
Already being hailed by the press as contender as one of the best independent dancefloor albums of the year, the debut long-player from London-based Chris McCormack is the solid sum of many high quality parts. Where his top-selling UK Gold material showed a willingness to stray from the bangin' techno blueprint, 'There Are Better Ways' gets as full spectrum as most producers are ever going to get without spreading themselves too thinly. From the ambient tones and hesitant keys on the opener 'Alone', to the fierce club minimalism of 'Ariffmatik' and the tough battle beats of the title track, the production here begs belief for both punch and clarity yet his eye for a catchy tune shines through time after time. Not a filler in sight, and the first deep house I've heard from him too - check 'Imagination' for some infectiously chunky Drop Music-style swing. There are better ways, and I'm sure he'll find them before most. **VS**

'DJ Wally' The Creepy Crawlies' (Quatermass)
This is the perfect soundtrack for a silent movie about shoplifting naked - unusual and interesting. Breakbeats tough enough to wear earrings to school saunter through 'I Must Be Mad' and 'The Crawlies' as carefully selected spoken samples ponder over swirls of strings, sci fi and split-second jazz. The album's atmosphere gradually darkens into the schlock trombone squeals of 'Fetish' and grooving menace of 'Out There in Dub Minor' - the kind of tune David Lynch would whistle in the shower. Excellent. **PO**

THE RIP-OFF ARTIST 'The Kids Are Alright' (Quatermass)
Self confessed kleptomaniac (that is of sound not actual goods, as 'that would be wrong') The Rip-Off Artist AKA Mark Haines has plundered children's records, children's toys (and adult toys!) along with comedy records, talking books, talking keychains and it seems anything else he could get his hands on in the production of this, his second album. The end result is a highly polished offering that is a little too electronic to be classified as loungecore, yet inhabits the same melodic downtempo sphere. Similar in both sound and humour to Wagon Christ, 'The Kids Are Alright' is an album that manages to be quirky and fun without ending up weird and marginalised. Steal it today! **M**

ROBERT NORMANDEAU 'Sonars' (Rephlex)
Described as 'acousmatic' music - like... whatever, Sonars is audio-experimentation given a wide vision, more so than the usual self-centered experience that Isolationist music presents. The music is collage-heavy at times, a bustle of space and tension that can soon throw you into a pretty tense state so this isn't recommended to the tired or stressed. But beneath the heavy atmosphere there are some pleasingly strange sounds and melodies going on. Mainly sounds mind you. **EB**

ALBUMS ALBUMS ALBUMS ALBUMS ALBUMS

DREADZONE 'Sound' (Ruff Life Records)
The Dreadzone boys return with 'Sound', and as expected all their trademarks are present. Big dub bass-lines, trippy effects, 'rasta' samples and funky breakbeats all remain an integral part of the music and tracks such as 'Dread Pon Sound' stay true to their roots. However, I was surprised by some of their newer, more diverse material. Tracks like 'Black Rock n' Roll' are far poppier and more commercially friendly than previous works, and draws comparison with 'The Freestylers' in their musical style. I personally prefer Dreadzone's traditional approach and its these are tracks on the album that really work - my favourite being the closing 'Love Comes and Goes', the most down-tempo track on the album. Has its moments and probably worth a listen, but for me it doesn't live up to their previous offerings. **FB**

TRURL AND KLAUPACIUS 'Sing Sweet Software' (Supremat)
Echoing a rich heritage of sound experimentation, executive producer Cristian Vogel presents an album where his machines truly do all the talking. Here Vogel borrows the metaphor of machines constructing machines: choosing his favourite pieces of software and letting them programme each other. The result is compelling, although hardly likely to have your little sister dancing around the living room. Extreme syncopation and erratic cyborg melody are the flavours, with interference, clicks and cuts punctuating the sound at every turn. Inevitably, this will be dismissed by many as going too far beyond the pale. But what's particularly striking is the sense of drifting along in a machine-generated sonic freeform, as with 'Breathe Bad Hair', eerily echoing the vibrating, creaking shuffle of your computer processor and modem frequencies. Are the machines taking over, Mother? I dunno - I'm hiding under the bedclothes. **GW**

SLAM 'Alien Radio' (Soma)
Hard to fault the Glaswegian granddaddies of techno after all they've done for the music many of us have enjoyed for the last ten tears or more. Everyone involved in this kind of music usually has a tale to tell - and usually a life-altering one - about a Slam night, and their reputation requires no embellishment here. This record undoubtedly will cement that reputation among an even wider sphere of influence: it's an accessible, well-produced, emotional accomplishment that demonstrates studio skills of the highest order. It has clear and respectful references to Detroit techno, Chicago house, and even ventures into more experimental electro territory with title track 'Alien Radio'. There's well judged collaborations with Dot Allison, Tyrone Palmer and Lavelle. It's got the words 'masterpiece' and 'best' written all over it. It's Slam on top form, eclipsing 1996's 'Headstates' and proving a deep, varied understanding of dance music. But there's that lingering sense that it's a little too polished to break new-ground in the way that those infamous Sub Club nights of yore did. There's nothing that makes you look up at the speakers in wonder and exuberantly shout 'fuck me!' with your hair standing on end. I'll leave the cynical over-expectations at that - it's a solid LP of high-quality dance music that'll probably go down as a classic... **GW**

V/A 'Straightahead Records Compilation' (Straightahead)
'The sun is shining, the weather is sweet'. In anywhere except England. Weather aside, if it's summer vibes your after, you could do worse than try this. Built around jazzy bass-lines, lively beats and warm synth washes, it takes in hip-hop, trip-hop, funk and chill out. However, it's the tracks that lurk in the shadows that steal the limelight. Head-nodders like 'Freeform Theme' by the Freeform Arkestra and tracks by Everbound twist the summery theme on its head. Driving double basses, clattering rhythms and film score samples create a far more interesting mix. On the whole well produced - though the tracks can be a bit hit and miss, but as a soundtrack for the summer.....it kicks 'Ibiza Hits' to pieces! **FB**

MILINKO 'A New Life' (Satanic Charme)
Appearing on the sister label of Spain's Subterfuge Records, this album from a seemingly prolific yet low profile Spaniard called Luis is likeable from the onset. Commencing with the slurred dub of 'Mantra Mope', 'A New Life' continues through funky techno, house and breaks terrain maintaining a bass-heavy air, always sounding synthetic and accessible, yet with enough production dynamics to really kick ass. There's plenty of reference points along the way, as displayed by the Basic Channel-esque 'Money Tension' and the 'French Kiss'-sampling 'Respect', but Luis puts plenty of his original ideas into play, changing tempos and moods swiftly yet deftly throughout. Perhaps a little tame in parts but a very solid album nonetheless. **DG**

URBAN SOUL COLLECTIVE 'Please Yo Self' (S.I. Project)
This is definitely the sound that has been doing the business on many dance floors around London for the last year or so: post-2 Step, post deep house, and occupying some unchartered territory between the two. The shuffling beats and warm synths will endear it to open-minded souls who welcome the dynamics of garage transposed onto, dare I say it, a more musical framework, and it also has one foot firmly placed in the 'broken beat' camp. Tracks like 'Midnite Love', with its dreamy vocals, suggest that crossover appeal is apparent, while the warm bass lick of 'So Right' is an irresistible slice of deep house that will certainly do the business in a club scenario. Elsewhere, 'Ain't No Sign' chugs along with vocodered stabs, and 'Dis Is It' is a bone fide song that moves and shakes to oh-so-soulful vocals and a shapeshifting bass line. It's beautifully produced from start to finish with that understated sense of letting the sheer groove of the tracks do the talking, plus there are spats of virtuoso musicianship amidst the entourage of syncopated percussion. Most appealing however is the happy blend of a positive vibe and a rugged dance floor sensibility, and although it's an artist album, the whole collection is given an all-important context by being mixed together by man of the moment Modaji. 21st Century soul music home-grown and tended with loving care. **GW**

V/A 'Snow Robots Vol 1 and 2' (Suction)
Suction's engagement with a retro synth-pop sound predates the last two years burgeoning rise of this re-visited genre, however these two compilations effectively take us to the points of no return in both a forwards and a backwards direction. Volume 1 collects early out-of-print tracks with two up-to date remixes and two unreleased future tracks, whilst volume two collects later out-of-print tracks and combines it with more remix projects and fresh tracks. Taking the latter first it's tempting to assume that as Suction moves forward the sound seems to move backwards and customises an idealised 1980 (as opposed to 1980s) sound executed by the later punk-electronic scene and the early futurist scene - for example Human League and Visage. Without re-visiting the specifics of the spookiness and cultural technics of 1980 in 2001, it has now reached the point where Suction (arguably the best in this field) have passed through the simulcrum and are now producing better 1980 tracks than those produced in 1980. Gregory and Jason work their alchemy better than many of the newcomers to this scene, and their selection of cohorts such as D'arcangelo, ISAN and Skanfrom seem to be able to sample and freeze that undefined moment when pop breathed its last sigh and gave itself up for girl/boybandism. Volume 1 is considerably more revealing, as you are given the chance to bench-test your guesses as to how the Suction sound manifested itself before the synth-pop sweetness of today. Not an easy task to pin down the origins of a sound that progresses backwards in 'cultural time' as it goes forward in 'real time'! Like a washing powder advert on the TV, the results are startling, with more a case of 'the inside of a dalek' than 'the emperors new clothes'. Suction's beginnings stir in their development of "distortion pedal new wave" - a nasty mash-up of breakbeat, industrial and acid with the odd Autechre carcass put to the sword. It's discomforting listening, and the notes reveal Suction's own reaction to their disillusionment with the "digital irony" prevalent in the bedroom electronics scene. The tracks themselves bear testament to the US (and Canada) take on the UK drill and bass scene pushing forwards agonisingly slowly in fits and starts through labels like Hydrant and Plug Research, until the scene impacted with its own over dwelt on reflection and splintered into the crypto-hip-hop of Schematics, the sonic execution of Kid 606 and the sublime electro of Suction. This volume does contain a highlight with the inclusion of 'Big Robot / Deep Pond' in what appears to be an industrial-electro re-work of 'White Lines', whilst the two unreleased 'future' tracks return the listener to the soft clad sanity of modern day Suction. Though calling the track 'Steve Strange' is a bit of an easy option - how about 'Mind of a Toy Thief' for a better working title. **IT**

CAROLINE LAVELLE 'Brilliant Midnight' (Teldec)
Originally a classical musician, Caroline Lavelle's highly acclaimed first mainstream album 'Spirits' is now followed up by 'Brilliant Midnight'. Having worked in the past with everyone from Massive Attack, Radiohead and Peter Gabriel to Nigel Kennedy, Miss Lavelle seems to have more connections than Clapham Junction. In fact, her previous collaborations give a good insight into what to expect. Its got to be said that sing, she certainly can. Her voice is powerful and haunting, and it's easy to see why she's been likened to Tracey Thorn and Beth Orton. Although taking on various guises, the songs are on the melancholy side of things and are accompanied by piano, folk guitar or big strings, again echoing her classical roots. Although not really my 'cup of tea' the music is full of emotion, its well produced, and if you're into any of the artists mentioned in this review, it's probably worth a listen. **FB**

>RECOMMENDED<
SUSUMU YAKOTA 'Grinning Cat' (The Leaf Label)
It's been a while since I last had a good ambient zulu boogie so hearing Susumo Yokoto's river deep compositions has brought me a little piece of nostalgic joy. Drifting strings and pianos cut up and fuse into the electronic farmyard beats and somewhere a child is born. All that good shit. Yokota is Leaf's biggest selling artist and it's not hard to see why, there's a very finely tuned musical mind at work here making music that is appealing, intricate and emotional. EB

>RECOMMENDED<
310 'After All' (The Leaf Label)
New Yorkers Joseph Dierker and Tim Donovan deliver a second LP to the Leaf Label with more musical collages of modern city life. Despite the claims of people like Mr Bambaata this is surely the sound of New York. With so many cultural influences thrown together over half heard conversations and atmospherics you get a distinct feel for the frantic pace and transience of modern urban living. Despite the laid back nature of their sound it never quite lets you relax, always niggling it's way into your consciousness somehow and changing your mood from moment to moment. **TH**

JAMES RUSKIN 'Into Submission' (Tresor)
Ruskin's second album for Tresor, and it's something of a production masterclass. The titles give you a clue as to the mood here: when sharp-edged 'Paranoia' breaks down with what sounds like a tweaked sample of terror-tot Danny from 'The Shining' repeating his disturbing refrain "Redrum", you can almost hear a psychotic Jack Nicholson preparing to batter your door down with a fucking great axe. Although not necessarily a bad thing, some of the best efforts are kept quite short: 'Escape Or Die' retains an ominous tone over which scattered keys reverberate, and 'Is It Really Me?' combines cinematic strings and little melodic riffs over tough, jacking electronic house. 'The Next Broadcast' concludes the album nicely with syncopated beats and dubbed out effects. It's an evolution for Ruskin - not necessarily a departure - laced with a heady dose of dance floor bump, the tracks ooze moodiness, with the overall tone defined by atmospheric darkside rumblings and pulsating drum patterns. 'Into Submission' is impressive and coherent, albeit an album that might make you close the curtains, shut the windows and forget it's summer. **GW**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Compilation Vol.9' (Tresor)
Faultless collection of techno from Berlin's Tresor camp, keeping the quality right up for the label's ninth compliation. Well, with such a wide roster now to choose from, there really wouldn't be much excuse to put out anything worse, would there? Old timers such as Blake Baxter, Surgeon, Vogel and Landstrumm compete admirably alongside relative newcomers to the fold such as Sims, Ruskin, Shufflemaster and Herbert, each donating a contribution strong for their style. Standouts include Sim's tough morphing loop cut, Herbert's warped ghost-train house and a stripped-down stretch of bleep beat from DBX-man Daniel Bell. A compulsory vinyl purchase for any discerning techno head. **DG**

>RECOMMENDED<
AROVANE_PHONEM 'Aer (Valid)' (Vertical Form)
The first album release on London's consistently superb Vertical Form is a joint collaboration between electronic experimentalists Arovane and Phonem. Whilst as downbeat and texture-based as the label's previous output, there's plenty that somehow sticks in the memory between listens. Described by Phonem as 'one big research project', all eight tracks of 'Aer (Valid)' drip with synthetic soul, from the broken AFX-esque beats of 'Valid Rant' to more futuristic cuts such as the sublime title track and the beatless bicycle funk of 'Neyem'. All in all an intricate and emotional collage of beautifully textured micro-rhythms that serves the label well as its first long-player. **VS**

WAIWAN 'Musical Paths and Rhythms' (X:treme)
Waiwan is a talented producer and remixer who has worked with labels such as Compost and Naked Music. This is his first mix album which takes in a vast collage of influences from jazz, funk, fusion and beyond. Twelve tracks are seamlessly mixed together using sounds and effects from his studio to create a flowing blend of styles. After a dark and brooding opening, the mix takes in silky jazzy sounds, off-beat house, Afro-styled beats and emotion tinged lyrics as Waiwan trips through a variety of soulful tracks. Featuring tracks from the likes of Digital Soul, S.I.Collective, Africanism and Pressure Drop, this is a highly cultured representation of modern jazz music. **MH**

MIXED COMPILATIONS

>RECOMMENDED<
RECLOOSE PRESENTS 'Jigsaw Music Mix' (Eskimo)
So often the adage that good producers do not make good DJ's is proved to be a correct one. Recloose however, best known as a recording artist on Planet E, manages to prove this wrong. The mixing is simple but slick, and manages to keep a good pace up throughout an interesting track selection. There are also sporadic (but not overdone) vocal snippets of 'Recloose in the mix' like an old style radio show. There is a strong Detroit presence here as Recloose includes tracks from himself, label-mate Ibex, Theo Parrish and Anthony Shakir. The emphasis is firmly on house-based tracks but there are elements of dub, jazz, funk and more broken beats blended into the mix. All in all a well-crafted and solid CD that fans of Recloose will love. **MH**

>RECOMMENDED<
UNIVERSAL INDICATOR 'Innovation In The Dynamics Of Acid: Mixed By The Kosmik Kommando' (Rephlex)
Back in the mid 90's the boys at Rephlex started getting disillusioned with the way techno was going and the demise of Chicago Acid sounds. To remedy the situation (probably for their own benefit more than anyone else's) they recorded a wealth of raw analogue tracks with an insistent low-fi sound and commenced releasing them in four highly limited forms (red, blue, yellow and green). These quickly became underground classics and spawned a wealth of myths about their origins, all of which were apparently false. Since these innocent looking twelves were landmarks in techno history and now changing hands for up to £250 for the set, the honourable chaps at Rephlex now make 95% of those tunes available to you on one handy CD mixed by the Kosmik Kommando into an unslaught of 303's, 101's, 606's and 202's without comparison to this day. All that remains to be said on the subject is a quote from Rephlex themselves, "Trance is everywhere now. It sucks more than any genre we can think of at the moment. This CD is exactly what those people need." **AG**

V/A 'Tech House Phenomena 6: Mixed by Richard Grey' (Eukahouse)
The sixth instalment from the Eukahouse boys, this time compiled and mixed by Richard Grey. And, not unlike 'Neighbours', its very similar to the previous five episodes. Now don't get me wrong, Mr. Grey obviously knows a thing or two about mixing. The records generally mix together well, however it's got to be said it's unadventurous to say the least. Sure, in places it had me chunkin' along - 'Beautiful' by Ground Level and 'Big Air' by Hot Lizard are great tracks, but generally I was far from desperate to dance. It's the type of compilation that works well as the soundtrack to a barbecue. Phenomena it isn't and as for 'Bringing down the walls between house and techno' as proclaimed, it seemed more 'lost in limbo' to me. **FB**

V/A 'Hypercity - Forcetracks Mixed By Andrew Weatherall' (Force Tracks)
Sedately spearheading the German dub house awakening, Force Inc's offshoot release this timely mix of their back catalogue deftly mixed by a perfect geezer for the job. Weatherall's flawless fluid blending maintains enough momentum to showcase the style of soft pummelling kickdrums and clickity hi-hats, layering neatly and adding FX sparingly yet precisely whilst charting a course with definite structure despite the fact it's difficult to differentiate between the artist's styles. Rising talents such as Hakan Lidbo, Safety Scissors and M.R.I. all feature, with a total of 15 cuts making up a pleasurably hypnotic listening experience for fans of the style. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
V/A 'Golden Gate Grooves (West Coast House Mixed By Dano)' (Kickin'?)
Classy 2 CD collection of deep house from assorted stables, showcasing the West Coast American sound as typified by labels such as Grayhound and Red Melon. The first disc offers 14 delights from the likes of Francois K, Those Norwegians and Red Melon's Dano, all mixed-up ably enough by the Melon man himself, whilst disc 2 sees four less tracks - though generally of a higher calibre - come together in an unmixed format. Dano's mix takes a while to get going but will have you hooked by the time Tigerhook Corp's excellent 'Welcome To The 21st Century' kicks in, whilst the unmixed selection on disc 2 makes for a sociable listening affair that maintains a very high standard from start to finish. **DJ**

V/A 'Nite:life 06 Mixed By Ian Pooley' (NRK)
Ian Pooley offers us a portrait of his DJ ability, surprisingly for the first time, on NRKs solid 'Nitelife' Series. It's a deep affair, showing his penchant for US house (Mood II Swing and Derrick Carter's mix of Blaze) as well as the deeper, more techy-edged sound of DJ Jes. There's also room for Technasia's latest cut, 'Evergreen': not quite 'The Force', but nice enough anyway. It's all pleasantly woven together, and makes for good summer listening, but in this deluged compilation market it won't blow your mind for stunning originality. Apparently done live and proper, like, you can even hear Pooley giving the record a cheeky nudge here and there before the sound of galloping horses descends... **GW**

V/A 'The Last DJz On Earth - Mixed & Compiled By Space DJz' (Primal Rhythms)
Forget taking you on a journey, the Space DJs put the boot in from the off with their take on how to rock a dance-floor. And rock it certainly would. Split into two CDs, Ben Long and Jamie Bissmire take it in turn to recreate their DJ sets on your stereo. With track-listings including many of the current heavy-weights of techno such as Umek, Dave Clarke, Oliver Ho etc, etc, they mix, scratch and cut them up into a relentless bangin' frenzy. Covering a range of styles from the ghetto funk of DJ Godfather to more purist loops, it remains funky throughout. With a couple of new tracks from the boys themselves thrown in, although not quite as good as seeing them live, it comes pretty close. **FB**

www.overloadmedia.co.uk

To coincide with the publication of Overload Magazine Version 8.0 Overload Online launches its new website at the start of July. Interviews soon to be uploaded include Neil Landstrumm, Recloose, Si Begg, Inigo Kennedy and Charlie Hall. There's also an in-depth look at the Clicks n' Cuts scene written by Ian Trowell plus plenty of audio-visual entertainment from a host of up-and-coming artists.

www.hyperdub.com

Excellently presented site dedicated to the UK Breakbeat culture. It's positive to see a site so open-minded in it's approach to intelligent club music and Hyperdub clearly has the attitude to help it become a major player in the development of the post-Jungle fallout UK street sounds have gone through. Currently online there are interviews with DJ Spooky, Lemon D & Dillinja, Eminiem and a ponder on E in hip-hop culture by Simon Reynolds. Indeed, it seems Reynolds 'intelligent rave' definition is the main focus of this site and it looks as if exciting developments are on the horizon judging from the contents of Hyperdub.

www.ravingmad.co.uk

Wonderfully pointless collection of pictures of ravers doing what comes naturally; hugging, gurning, raving. This is like Mixmag without the text, what a bloody great idea. Get your fill of fluffy bras without being distracted by the ramblings of a bunch of ex-Oxbridge tossers who wouldn't know decent music if it punctured their eardrums.

www.modifyme.com

A strange but compelling web oddity that you could lose whole hours to if you're not careful, and consequently not the best one to fire up at work if you've got something that needs doing quickly (or possibly the best, depending on your situation). Apparently put together by the bloke behind www.squarerootof-1.com, another impressive and endearingly useless endeavour, the mysterious, floating shapes react to your touch and affect the music in ways that may or may not have logic to them, kind of what the Aphex Twin's studio might be like.

www.epitonic.com

In this essentially Napster-free day and age, and before anyone can get round to actually working out how to use alternatives like Audiogalaxy and Gnutella, Epitonic is an excellent place to go for your daily MP3 fix. It's based in San Francisco, so dance music is referred to as 'electronica', but don't let that put you off. Whereas Napster was a useful tool if you knew exactly what you were after, this is a laid-back pleasure garden of discovery, where you can idly browse the biogs and the clued-up commentary and even stream a sample of a tune before committing it to download. Think of it as a bit like a big library, only more fun, with better beats and without some miserable old bat hissing at you to keep quiet. The newsletter's worth signing up for as well, it's witty, pretty and will soon get you up to speed.

www.erowid.org

It may look like a homage to Lord of the Rings but this is actually a well written and researched vault of information on all things chemical and spiritual. The articles may be a bit on the sparse side but are always accompanied by a huge collection of links to other articles, both within this site and beyond. In doing so Erowid is an example of the best thing about the original spirit of the web, in that it forces you to look deeper and deeper into a subject -a cavernous resource of focused information. For the best laughs go straight to the user-experiences of different drugs; "Everything almost was, but in the final analysis, wasn't." - Like, far out man.

www.larrycarlson.com

Either a warning of the perils of extended acid abuse or a bountiful panoply of psychedelia, depending on your viewpoint, this tour de force of 'amazing mind fucking multimedia' has to be seen to be believed. At times amusing, at others downright bloody disturbing, this person or persons with far too much time on their hands has created a tripper's paradise, but not without its pitfalls. The navigation is bewildering at the best of times, and random clicks suck you deeper than you may wish to go into his and Chi Chi's (one and the same?) warped and fractured unconscious, with worrying diversions into what can only be termed 'acid pornography.' Be careful what state you enter in.

www.searchlightmagazine.com

The most prolific and long-serving anti-fascist magazine; Searchlight has a website that is unsurprisingly lacking in glamour but packed full of articles, some from as far back as the 1980's. It's also bang up to date with a couple of reports on the current problems facing Oldham, UK. In the light of the recent resurgence of the extreme right in many areas around Britain, it's time for us all to start re-educating ourselves in the current battle between 'respectable' fascist politics and the disgusting hidden agenda that their policies barely cover up. The problem never goes away, it just waits for the right moment to resurface. We, however, should maintain an interest at all times and this is the place to start.

www.dasound.com

Musicians rejoice, here's a site crammed full of freeware, shareware and demo software to help you in your work. There's virtual keyboards, MP3 stuff, Wav editors and loads more. And whilst you may have to hunt to find the resource you're looking for, if you approach the site with an open mind then you'll soon find yourself walking away with any number of quirky downloads to use and abuse.

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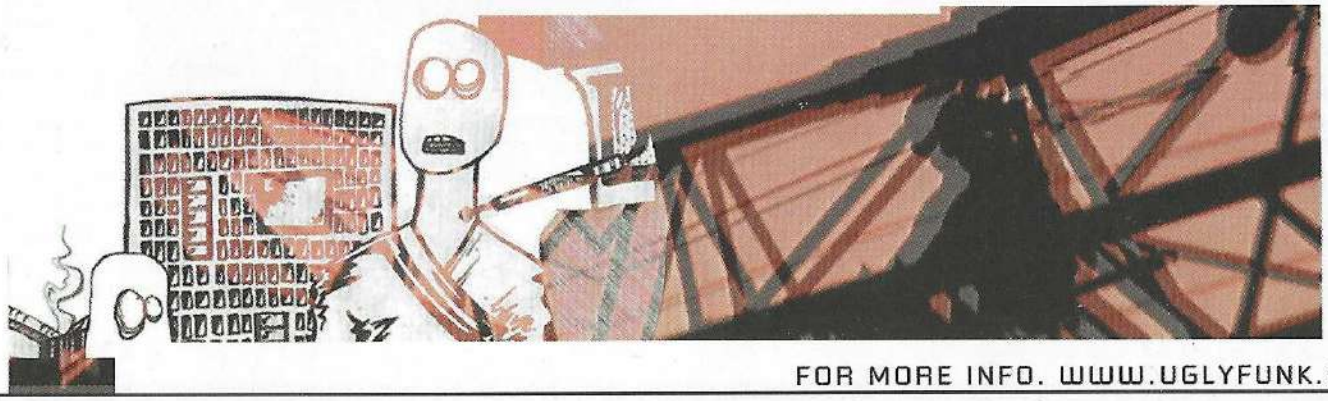

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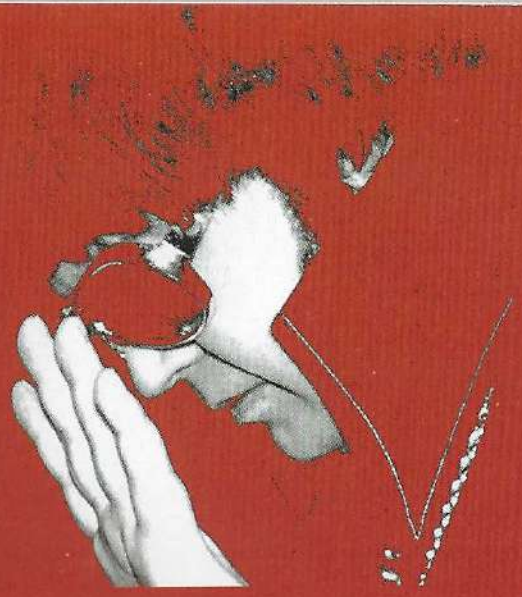

The phrase rock 'n' roll was first used in the 1950s to describe a new, primal groove. This potent expression, initially associated with a musical style, has come to symbolise far more over the past fifty years. So what is the essence of rock 'n' roll, and what is rock 'n' roll in 2001?

This paragraph could start with the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of rock 'n' roll, but that would be missing the point. Because rock 'n' roll is all about rebellion. I mean, look! It isn't even spelled properly. James Dean, with his rocker's quiff and cigs, is alleged to have lived fast, died young and listened to rock 'n' roll in between. And this connotation extends beyond the blurred reality of movie stars. Only thirty years ago, hooliganism was defined within Soviet Union law as "scoffing at authority, playing rock n' roll [and] committing petty criminal acts."

So it follows that, as the bad person's music of choice, rock n' roll should have roots in fibbing. According to some, Alan Freed coined the phrase "rock n' roll" to disguise the fact that his musical revue was performed largely by black musicians. By replacing "rhythm and blues" with "rock n' roll" in his advertising, he tapped into the more lucrative vein of the predominantly white neighbourhood of 1950s Cleveland, who were also tempted to attend.

The triumphant yelp of "good evening Cleveland!" thirty years later by Spinal Tap in their spoof "rockumentary" is ammunition for two more theories. Firstly, that rock n' roll is a black person's music played badly by white people. And secondly, as Spinal Tap greet each screaming enormodrome audience with the same words, that rock 'n' roll has now become synonymous with cliché. The "Be Here Now" album cover of self-dubbed "rock 'n' roll stars" Oasis features a brand new Rolls Royce half sunk in a swimming pool. The artwork might be original, but the idea certainly wasn't - Keith Moon from The Who did that years ago. While we're on the subject, I can't imagine where the opening riff to 'Don't Look Back In Anger' came from ...

It wasn't always so uninspired, though. Rock 'n' roll was once about danger, and threat to the public order. This was partly due to racially-inspired concern over white youth listening to "ghetto music", but also due to community leaders' fears over the potential spread of non-Christian values like narcotic abuse and sexual promiscuity espoused in the lyrics. In the 1950s, Elvis Presley, rock 'n' roll's most famous white-trash proponent, was banned by over-zealous censors from simulating the sexual act (read: wiggling his hips) during televised performances.

Rock 'n' roll, maybe because of all the naughty people performing and buying it, has also long been a byword for hedonism and drug abuse. Janis Joplin liked a drink, and Jim Morrison was never far from the medicine cabinet.

Whether it was Jerry Lee Lewis' mercurial piano playing or Iggy Pop's chest-slashing antics during gigs in the seventies, rock 'n' roll has also been characterised by performance. But importantly, this performance was sexual as well as theatrical. Originating in a time of pre-AIDS sexuality, and played largely by young men pre-occupied with young ladies, rock 'n' roll has since been criticised for the overt masculinity and cock-obsessed lyrical content.

Boil the above down and you can define rock 'n' roll as a music comprising of drum, bass and melody, originating in black American communities and performed largely by males before crossing over into white American mainstream culture to become a worldwide phenomenon. The lyrics, characterised by themes of rebellion, virility and sexual desire, were often deemed as threatening to the public order by some governmental and religious officials.

In 2001, is mainstream rap music the new rock 'n' roll?

It's a "popular type of dance music characterised by a heavy beat and simple melodies" (OED 2000 definition ... of rock n' roll, interestingly). Its sound and vocal style originates from the frustration of black urban America, but has infiltrated mainstream white to the extent that a weedy "yo!" and rhyming chant is de rigeur for all multi-selling boy-bands. It even has its own Elvis in misunderstood white-trash superstar Eminem, whose simulation of drug-taking in his live shows has attracted concern in the press.

More importantly, rap is officially a Bad Thing to listen to. The overtly profane and explicit lyrical content offers an invitation to rebellion for white middle-class kids, attracted by the "parental advisory" stickers appearing as a result of the censorship law demanded by Tipper Gore and her moron majority. Rap artists such as Ice T (whose track Cop Killer was given as an example of why censorship was necessary) used the cover art for Home Invasion, featuring a white teenage boy imagining all the gansta-ho-pimpin' in the lyrics as he listened to the album, to make the link even more explicit to fans and detractors alike.

Moreover, use of the expression "rap music" today, which originally described a vocal delivery style, already implies much more: male-dominated music form, sexist lyrics, and hedonistic lifestyle. Flavor Flav is a reformed coke addict. Snoop Dogg films porn in his "Dogg Pound". Suge Knight (ex-Deathrow Records MD) is in prison on gun-related charges. Puff Daddy, with his extravagant Ghetto Fabulous fashion and penchant for changing his name, is rap's very own Elton John. The East Coast/West Coast feud is the mods vs. rockers at on Brighton seafront, but with guns 'n' motors instead of stones 'n' mopeds.

This isn't to belittle rap, but rather to underline the fact that we've seen this before. Way back in 1993, a spoof "rapumentary" called CB4 lampooned the rap music industry, cementing the status of rap as an artform as officially ridiculous and predictable as rock 'n' roll seems now.

So what future for rap n' roll? As yesterday's outrageous ghetto music becomes tomorrow's mainstream pop, a new rock 'n' roll will surface somewhere else. Whatever form it takes, you can guarantee one thing - the kids'll go crazy. To paraphrase Mick Jagger: we'll know it's only rock and roll, but they'll like it.

WORDS> Isabel Hopwood

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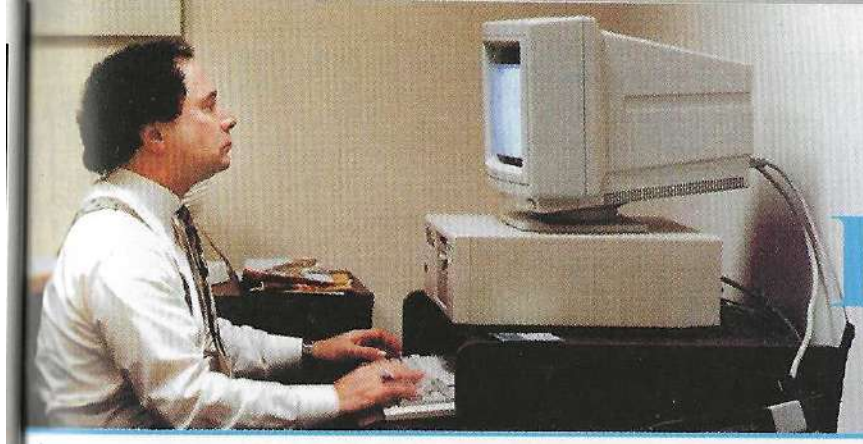

FALSE ECONOMY

The impact of the bursting of the Internet bubble has seen companies dissolve over-night and the creation of a new generation of transient workers, moving from failure to failure - but being paid very well along the way. Here, a certified 'dot com casualty' ruminates on the impact of these changes and looks at the wider picture that is unkowingly affecting us all...

No matter what your level of involvement in the Internet, we've all had quite a laugh at the fate of the New Economy over the last six months. How can you not raise a self-satisfied grin at the thought of Cahaart wearing charlatans losing their jobs after having spent much of the last two years being paid twice or three times that of a hard-working teacher or nurse to turn out something as simple as a web-site?

A collection of numbers, words and images, no less. Not to belittle the work that can go into the creation of a website - I've seen people spend three whole days in their office, sleeping under desks and working twenty hour days just to try and meet that deadline. But what needs to be examined by society in order to prevent such mindless, greedy optimistic opportunism occurring again are the causes of the failure of capitalism's most modern and indulgent manifestation. This is not a passing fad but rather the growth of everything the current Brand-is-God attitude propagates; image over product and quick profits before work-force benefits, wholly unsustainable ideals.

The new economy was based upon dreams built by people who didn't understand the legacy of the old economy and the old-guard were too frightened by the power held by the 'youth' (the ones who actually knew how to build the things) to effectively voice their opposition. Like your dad trying to dig Slayer when you were a kid for fear of losing touch with what made him passionate about music when he knew what was going on, so the Managers and Executives listened with awe-inspired ears to the rantings of kids without actually stopping to think, 'hang on, do I actually like the sound of this bloody awful racket?' It's similar to the House of Lords, sometimes you need a bunch of past-its to inform you why a new-fangled idea wouldn't have worked in the past and thus, why it probably wouldn't work today.

In the past the history of success was rooted in companies being conservative in their business practices, traditional supply and demand criteria ensured that long-term business plans were the staple for stable growth. Job security was something that employers took seriously and employees would regard their bosses with a mixture of awe (they pay my salary so I can live) and healthy disgust (I hate having to go to work - don't we all). Maybe it wasn't a good situation, but having equal respect for your employer as for yourself meant that you were part of a supporting family of people who worked for each other's benefit, not just your own. The bastion of the post-industrial workforce, the union, was a re-enforcement of community above and beyond organization designed to solely benefit the individual whilst the Internet generation workers had only one driving compassion - themselves. The modern-day premise of keeping a job until you find a better one goes against the intrinsic human desire to foster a community who support each other, something companies unknowingly promoted in the face of generally disintegrating family and societal values - themselves eaten away by a developing work-culture that promoted the overwhelming hunger for financial progress at any cost. And the root of this destruction was born in the opposite of such right-wing sounding ethics, ironically that other great Conservative belief, the power of the individual to forge their own path in the modern capitalist society. Perhaps the biggest shock to the system to have come out of the Internet age so far is the vast increase in skilled youngsters in Asia who have seized the opportunity to escape the sweatshop trap that currently threatens to swallow many of them up in favour of learning development skills. Many fear that this will simply result in development sweatshops. No one can accurately predict what is going to happen, this is why shares have tumbled and dotcom companies have crumbled. In hindsight, we can see that an old assistant to the get-rich-quick mentality was behind a lot of the chaotic failure - speculation.

The Internet economy prompted this much-feared and also revered beast, to become the significant driving force behind the development of capitalism for the first time since the Gold Rush. Instead of "There's gold in them there hills", (meaning the real, geographically physical hills of West Coast America) - the Internet entrepreneurs were looking to find semi-real money in a virtual world - when you looked at in retrospect it seems almost laughable. Just as the gold prospectors spent most of their time not striking it rich - because there were more prospectors than gold, so the majority of internet based companies have been desperately panning for business in the rivers of the economy, only to draw a few nuggets. Not enough to justify the effort. The big difference is that the prospectors didn't secure millions of pounds of funding beforehand and then blow it on £500 office chairs. Hell, most of them didn't even wash their underpants.

The fact that billions of pounds have been lost as a result of bad management, ego-driven dreams and opportunist careerism is not exactly a laughing matter. Having found myself drawn into the world of Internet based work over the last two years, I have now had the pleasure of losing my job two times in the last six months as I stood helpless to better the misinformed decisions of the 'cool' seeking suits. This doesn't exactly bother me too much. I never really wanted to work in what I already thought was a fickle environment anyway - but it doesn't exactly make my life any easier too. Having seen various high-level executives spunk money away like it was, well... spunk, on things like - cabs from London to the Midlands because the train is for the 'plebs', champagne breakfasts for the marketing department in order to make people feel that they really are truly 'valued', training for software products that would then be rejected because the necessary information hadn't been read by a top-level executive in the right hour - it doesn't take long for those who have actually had to work in a super-market and deal with real products and real customers to realize that the dreams of the righteous could never result in more than a desperate fight to get the best pay-off for those who've bullied and blagged their way to the top of an industry based on false promises. Real work comes from a desire to get a job done well, not to get the hell out as soon as possible after making your fortune.

Have any real lessons been learned from recent events? Surely the modern business mantra of 'image over substance' has to fall flat on its face soon? How much more dramatic than the Dotcom decline does it need to be?.. a stockmarket collapse? Another Great Depression? This is not just a trend in one industry but a wide sweeping attitude towards what we are as workers and how we react as consumers. The morally suspect have just got richer than ever before at the expense of the economy as a whole (where do you think all that Venture Capitalist funding came from? Pension funds, Saving accounts, Investment that could have gone into the Manufacturing Industry and so on). The worrying thing is that the profit over people attitude has had a big shock to the system - and it doesn't look as if those who call the shots have truly learnt the necessary lessons.

WORDS> Periphery Jones

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inigo kennedy

With fifty releases in five years, Inigo Kennedy must be one of the hardest working techno producers in the UK. Since initially hooking up with Karl O'Connor from Downwards, Kennedy's hard-edged sound has evolved through the flurry of 12"s that have appeared on labels like Molecular, Instillation, Morpheus, Exhibit and, of course, Missile, for who he has just released his debut album, 'The Bigger Picture'. He has secured an international reputation as a purveyor of thunderous digital funk - forging raw electronic grooves out of his often-obscure studio equipment - a fact that is reflected in both his productions and his DJ sets. Yet Kennedy retains a fairly modest degree of renown here in the UK.

"I've always been into electronics" he comments. "I was always pissing about with bits and bobs lying around the house - computers, fire alarm systems - so I probably got an interest through that. Then the whole digital keyboard thing came about just as I was getting into it, and I always remember being interested in the stacks of keyboards in the background rather than the singer."

After a boyhood spent taking things apart, Inigo Kennedy recalls an adolescence punctuated by musical epiphanies experienced in his bedroom. "I used to listen to the Radio One Rap Show," he explains. "Then I started getting more and more into the electronic side of it, which is why I liked Mantronix. They were landmark records for me. And then Paul Hardcastle blew me away: just in the middle of the hip-hop show when they're playing all the old hip-hop, and Paul Hardcastle comes on. I'd never heard anything like it before! I just thought, 'How did they make that? I want to make that!'"

Fascination with electronic machinery is a theme that repeats itself through the story of Kennedy's relatively short but intensely busy career. It also goes some way towards explaining the edgy, twisted techno that he spends most of his time concocting in his London studio. He's one of those strange breed of UK techno producers who, as a DJ, achieve a low-key presence at home but will regularly be rocking the pants off of thousands of people in various worldwide cities. He's constantly in the studio crafting releases (50 since 1996), regularly touring, and definitely enjoying his ever-advancing musical career, yet rarely gets booked in London. So does it bother him being ignored in his hometown? "I think most people doing what I'm doing in London would say the same thing. Most of the guys living here, I see them at the airport, jetting off somewhere. There are some good clubs here but they always book people from abroad, so it's reciprocal. I go abroad to guest, but here they book their guests from somewhere else. Maybe that's how it works. It doesn't bother me - I just let them get on with it. In a way it's good because it means I can get on with more stuff in the studio."

Kennedy commenced his studio career in his early twenties after being influenced by industrial outfits like Nitzer Ebb, Front 242 and Ministry, although it was the harder techno sound that really grabbed his attention. "In the context of a club it seemed to make more sense - Jeff Mills for example - with people really getting into it. It felt more sociable because the Industrial stuff was quite cold."

Unsuprisingly his first efforts were fairly rough-edged. "It was pretty harsh stuff. I was definitely inspired by early Mills records, quite a lot of the Surgeon sound and with a bit of the industrial edge in there as well. It was really raw - not mastered or anything - just bashed down onto metal cassette." His awakening was the culmination of having some serious dancefloor 'moments' while studying in Manchester: "you'd get people like Dave [Clarke] turning up and playing early Jeff Mills stuff and it really opened my eyes - the whole energy of it. I was there totally straight, just off my head on the music."

Going on to record for Karl O'Connor's ZET (where he also met Umek), before meeting Brenda Russell and then Tim Taylor of Missile Records, Kennedy's music is often tarred with the 'hard' brush: a condition where people seem unable accept a producer is capable of making anything but hi-octane dancefloor tracks. This goes some way to explaining the wider scope he has achieved with his recent debut album on Missile. "I suppose there's a few tracks on there that aren't like what I've done in the past, and it's why I called it 'The Bigger Picture', he explains. "Most of my releases in the past have been club orientated, so it's been a chance to showcase different things that I can do, or that I have done. That's really what it is about for me. I've been making that different sound all the time, so it's just what people haven't heard. I've got feelings too! Even I have early mornings!"

What the album can't disguise, however, is the warped sonic graffiti that fizzles its way insidiously through Kennedy's productions - frequencies tweaked and modulated to their outer limits. So with that technical fascination, is it possible he's been fiddling around under the bonnet, so to speak? "I haven't necessarily customised my machines, but I think maybe I use machines that other people who do this kind of music don't necessarily go for. I know there's a lot of guys out there buying 909s and so on, but I've always been interested in the things that are really hard to program. I'm into that kind of 'experimenting with sound' end of it. I like programming machines! So I've ended up with some bizarre digital synths and maybe that's made a difference. Plus I have made some of my own filters and mixers, which helps because it's something that other people don't use." Also of note is the sheer speed with which he produces his tracks, keeping the creative process as a strictly solitary pursuit: "I haven't done too many collaborations. I find it quite difficult because I work very fast, and know exactly what I want in my own head. I don't really want to slow down and explain it to anyone; it would be a bit of a compromise. I might change my mind someday!"

For the moment though, the plans veer more towards developing his own label, Asymmetric, taking his sound to new places (i.e. Brazil!), and waiting to gauge reaction to 'The Bigger Picture'. If it goes well, we may well see Kennedy tapping into that softer side of his psyche that he let slip on certain of the album's tracks. For the meantime, however, it's dark, digital funk all the way.

'The Bigger Picture' is out shortly on Missile. For more info visit www.inigokennedy.com.

WORDS> Gavin Weale

BOOK SELECTER

overload

'Out Of It - A Cultural History Of Intoxication'
By Stuart Walton
(Hamish Hamilton)

IBSN 0-241-14038-2

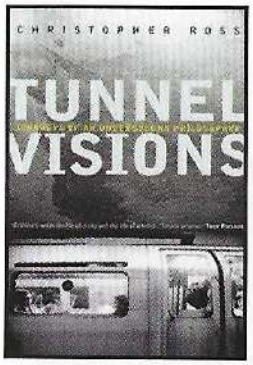
In recent times of Drugs Seasons, Exclusives and general moral panic, Stuart Walton delivers a thought-provoking and highly readable account of the use of intoxicants through the ages. His somewhat academic text draws upon the roles, laws and histories of intoxicants across the cultural board, examining the quest for altered states as something we are biologically pre-disposed to; part of a basic human appetite, a legitimate social practice rather than a dysfunction.

There are no reports of fully formed societies in history that didn't use psychoactive substances, bar the Inuit due to their environmental inability to grow anything. Since Ergot and Christianity's first victory over intoxicant use, the concept of prohibition for the good of society has been subject to scrutiny, debate and hypocrisy. The author warns that ideas about the usefulness of drugs have been muddied by criminalisation and the search for knowledge and self awareness in this way should not be considered a crime in the traditional sense of the word as the use of drugs do not victimise other people or groups.

As the text so lucidly points out, we are not trusted as individuals to make decisions about substance use, so the powers that be would rather keep it out of our hands altogether. Yet if criminalization will stamp out illegal drug use altogether then why is it taking so long? Walton views the War On Drugs as scapegoating certain groups in society to draw attention away from institutional causes of disaffection. If drug abuse is brought on by the hopelessness of urban decay then why do rock stars and celebrities show such interest? Why should it be that the shamanistic DMT uses of the Yanomari Indians of Venezuela are considered heightened explorations of the soul and our own ingestion as debasing at best? Does anyone have the right to stop another from his own leisure pursuits simply because Western society is so intent on repressing our gustatory appetites? Could it be simply a sign of self-loathing at their own lack of adventurousness? Are we to adhere passively to rules administered to us by people who believed in Cake, the Made Up drug?

Historical commentary, extensive research and above all the genuine aim to inform the modern-day media sponge about something he didn't already know. And not a word wasted.

WORDS> Kirsty Matthewson



'Tunnel Visions - Journeys Of An Underground Philosopher' by Christopher Ross
(Fourth Estate)

ISBSN 1-841-15566-7

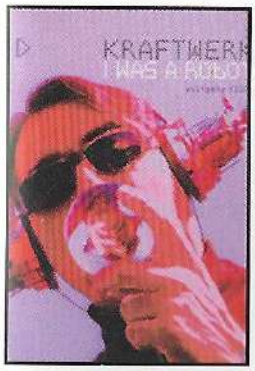
Self-styled Underground philosopher Christopher Ross tells it like it is, through the eyes of a bottom-rung Station Assistant at Oxford Circus, Platform 6. This is a totally unique autobiographical tale and a fascinating insight into the mind of the author who ponders life, the universe and everything from deep beneath the human zoo. He observes the human race and draws on his wide-ranging experiences as a world traveller and an encyclopedic knowledge of philosophy and eastern religion to explain everyday interaction.

Ross is not your typical London Underground employee. A fully qualified corporate lawyer, a martial arts expert and fluent in Japanese, he'd spent the previous twenty years criss-crossing the globe having grown disillusioned with the corporate world's institutionalised dishonesty. His personal mission was simple: he wanted an honest job that would provide him with enough money to survive whilst simultaneously freeing up his mind. He used his time to write his "small book" as he modestly calls it.

He thought of himself as a spy, feeling almost invisible in his uniform as he analysed the human race and kept himself amused. He makes attempts at unravelling the rat race and the commuter's obsession with constraints such as conformity and time. He shines a torch on the slackers who work for London Underground. The colleague, for example, who used his time at work to sleep in a secret cupboard locked from the inside. Inevitably there are many examples of the stupid general public. Take the man who was seen emerging from one of the tunnels, having been told delays meant it would probably be quicker to walk to the next station. The junkies, the beggars, the tourists, the mentalists, all are here.

The narrative is witty and the style precise. Christopher Ross uses concise language and makes potent associations between wide readings and disparate sources, often scraping at the darker side of human nature to create a highly individual and thought-provoking read.

WORDS> SZA



'Kraftwerk - I Was A Robot' by Wolfgang Flur (Sanctuary Publishing)

ISBN: 1-86074-320-X

Electronic music owes an incomprehensible debt of gratitude to Kraftwerk. Four electrotechpopmeisters from the Rhineland took a vision of music and robotic theatre and shoehorned it onto the rest of the world, laying foundations and creating a catalyst for all that was to follow.

This is Flur's autobiographical account of life to date, through his many years as Kraftwerk percussionist to the present day project Yamo. Kraftwerk provides the vehicle for the literal journey, but this is really a book about Flur, and his honesty is at times almost embarrassing for the reader.

It is soon apparent that Kraftwerk were, in reality, two bands in one. Hans and Florian, founder members, liked the high life and flaunted their money, whilst Wolfgang and Karl were treated as little more than session musicians, often broke, their creative input was publicly concealed, and in later years, blatantly denied. This two-tier structure of the band created obvious difficulties, and it is these difficulties that Flur deals with, exorcising the ghost of Kraftwerk and allowing his life to move forward.

Along the way we are presented with many delightful anecdotes. Tales of life and touring abound, presented in full cerebral Technicolor with a frankness that is extremely rare, and consequently, all the more remarkable for it. Listening to the Who, for me, will never seem quite the same again, whilst many readers will identify with the agonizing starkness of reality encountered in Bombay.

Part II deals specifically with the Kraftwerk situation as it stands, and here a not unexpected bitterness does appear, bitterness primarily on the part of Ralf and Florian, seemingly unable to accept that there is life beyond their precious machine. Though out of place with the bulk of the book, I can understand why its inclusion was essential for Flur's own personal development.

The faultless translation should be commended, retaining a subtle and charming style that rolls along effortlessly and fluently. There is an honest beauty that sparkles within the pages of this book, and my only real regret is that it was all over far too soon.

WORDS> low.life

>RECOMMENDED VIDEO<

'The Sonox Fireplace Video'

Why not turn your television into a beautiful incinerator full of Ibiza compilations and chart toppers. Relax, kick back and enjoy the fume free atmosphere supplied by those techno mad folk from Sonox.com. This thirty minute promo video sees all manner of putrid chart nonsense tonged attentively into a crackling fireplace for your pleasure. Sonox say the Fireplace video TM is the next best thing to having your own bonfire of crap music at home and some people may even prefer it to the real thing...

recloose

If you trust Carl Craig's ear, translated onto his Planet E roster of artists, you'll note (if you hadn't already realised) that there's more to underground electronic music from Detroit than just techno. And judging on the impeccable form of his career so far, Recloose, aka Matt Chicoine, is about to come galloping out of the Planet E stables at full canter, with an album on the way and a production midas-touch that has seen him swapping remixes with the likes of Jazzanova and Matthew Herbert. Acclaimed for his self-titled "shapeshifting" DJ sets, and without a trace of agoraphobia in evidence judging by his recent tour of Europe, he is at the forefront of new wave Detroit artists. Overload hunted the Recloose down in his Detroit apartment...

It's less than 24 hours until the start of the Detroit music festival and the man who gave Chicoine his break in the world of electronic music, and helped nurture his career since, Carl Craig, has just been publicly disgraced by Carol Marvin, the co-organiser of the 2nd Detroit Music Festival. Chicoine's goat is well and truly got, but over the phone from the epicentre of the fiasco he remains remarkably composed.

"I really had a bad impression of techno for the longest time, because of what I associated it with where I lived, and it's just amazing, I think, that I could be oblivious to what was happening for so long - and what had happened before. I think it's just a comment on this area of the country and how it misperceives things and write things off without looking or understanding what it is, and I fell victim to that for a while. A lot of people around here work along those same assumptions that I worked along: that techno is just drugs music for kids in fucked-up warehouses swinging glow sticks and giving each other backrubs. That contingent will still be there - but what was great about the festival last year was seeing those people come out and make that realisation that I had made seven years ago. You could see it in their faces - like older local people - being like 'Oh yeah! I remember this shit' and seeing them dance!"

He is, of course, explaining the stigma attached to techno by mainstream America, and his own late awakening to the sound that dramatically changed the face of modern electronic music - a sound that evolved in a city less than an hour away from his suburban home as he was growing up. While the pioneers of Motor City's new electronic funk were making historic records that would contribute to the birth of the gargantuan sub-culture now known as dance music, Chicoine's head was, at least cognitively, elsewhere. "I think it had to do with your classic division with your kids who listen to hip hop and funk, versus kids who listen to techno, and there's a serious line down the middle of those camps. What I came to realise though, when people would say "listen to this tape" or whatever, was that a lot of this stuff I had been into as a kid, but I didn't know was techno."

So while the subliminal osmosis of the Detroit techno sound occurred via the radio, Chicoine was undergoing an apprenticeship that would perhaps fashion the most indelible signature on his future career, by playing saxophone in a jazz ensemble band. The thrill of live performance, which he more recently rekindled when touring with Craig's Innerzone Orchestra, is one that has never left him: "It went from me playing in bands to me DJing, and trying to transplant the feeling of playing an instrument to that. So when I discovered I couldn't fully do that I decided to try production. I wanted to have my hands on creating what actually went on the record, which is also a lot of fun. They're all different aspects of music but I'm still missing that element of actually being able to spontaneously create melody, play a solo, or just react to music and play totally over something."

For the uninitiated, Recloose is a Detroit-based DJ and producer who has created more than a fair murmur of worldwide approval with each release he's turned his hand to. Discovered (in a sandwich bar) and nurtured by Planet E boss Carl Craig, he recently confirmed his turntable prowess with a "scatterbrain" DJ mix on Belgium's Eskimo Records - "Jigsaw Music".

And although not prolific by his own admission ("I'm kind of kicking myself in the ass!") - with three EPs and nine or ten remixes to his name - he's perhaps better known for his comprehensively crafted productions: by which I mean that when you play a Recloose release you won't be merely hearing a 'track'. You'll be experiencing a piece of music finely crafted from start to finish, laden with a rich patchwork of samples, and smattered with a cosmopolitan palette of generic colours ranging from hip hop and electro to techno and drum 'n' bass. Although he insists he's no virtuoso, the Recloose sound is barely definable and completely irresistible. So is this a product of his musical background? "In terms of production I think it's been very helpful. I think my little bit of experience has opened my ears up and I can hear the music better: when I'm putting samples together I can really hear things that go together a lot better than if I hadn't had that time playing instruments, learning and developing my ear."

1999's 'Spelunking EP' is definite testimony to a well-trained ear, achieving a sublimely blended coherence despite its stylistic schizophrenia: especially with the electro-infused bass line propelling a clattering four-four groove on 'Soul Clap', and the spun-out synths of 'Get There Tonight'. Chicoine's first excursion on to vinyl, however, was back in 1997, with his debut 'So This Is The Dining Room' - and remains his most tangential, experimental release to date. So how does he feel about it now?

"If you'd asked me a year ago I would have told you that I was kind of embarrassed about it, because I feel like I've changed so much and I've learned a lot since then. Now listening to it, it almost sounds like somebody else because it's been that long ... I'd say that release was pretty much everything I'd ever done up to that point, with the addition of two other songs I had at home. When I gave Carl that stuff I hadn't been making records for more than, maybe, six or eight months."

"A lot of people around here work along those same assumptions that I worked along: that techno is just drugs music for kids in fucked up warehouses swinging glow sticks and giving each other backrubs."

His latest stage of musical evolution is the long-awaited LP for Planet E: "It's a big question mark in the sky, man!" which leads me onto asking about his relationship with Carl Craig, a subject that, not surprisingly, provokes a passionate outburst. "He's been an enormous help, in a lot of different ways: with production, lending me money, and equipment. He's given musical advice, touring advice, life advice - he's a good guy and a good friend. That's why it hurt me so much when he was fired, and was made to look incompetent, and his name was dragged through the mud by, I'm sorry, this opportunistic, evil bitch... That's a little raw, but that's how I honestly feel about it. I think this woman has no respect for anybody. Not only for playing Carl, but also that she would let her ego get in the way of this festival, and trying to ruin this opportunity for millions of people, and tainting it... give me a break, it's so ill... it's fucked up."

And while the worldwide musical fraternity raise its glasses and says "here, fucking here!" Chicoine suddenly feels a twinge of guilt for his outburst. But this is more than a polemic born out of a base sense of loyalty: as you'd expect from a talent like Recloose, it's all about the music. "I don't know - I don't want to be player hating! I get on these tirades, but it's because I feel so passionate about it. It's important that people know about these things - even if they aren't directly involved - for the people who are coming and the people who will come next time, and people in general who love music that comes from Detroit."

Recloose's as yet untitled debut album is due out this autumn.

Check www.overloadmedia.co.uk for the full Overload interview with Recloose.

WORDS> Gavin Weale

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OVERLOAD

SIGNING OFF

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that this is the last issue of Overload. As we hope you appreciate, you cannot run a free magazine through love and enthusiasm alone and after much painful soul-searching we have decided to call it a day. We hope everyone appreciates what Overload has tried to accomplish and will take our quest as an inspiration to try and better our achievements and perhaps more importantly, to continue to support the worldwide scene of electronic music and social awareness.

In the meantime, we will be turning our editorial attention to our newly revamped website www.overloadmedia.co.uk. We invite your thoughts and contributions for online publication. Hopefully one day it will be feasible to return to the printed format, so keep watching because you never know.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to:

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It's been a blast. Let's hope we can find time to chill during the fallout.

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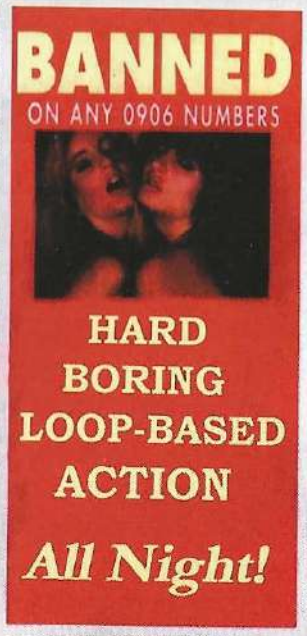

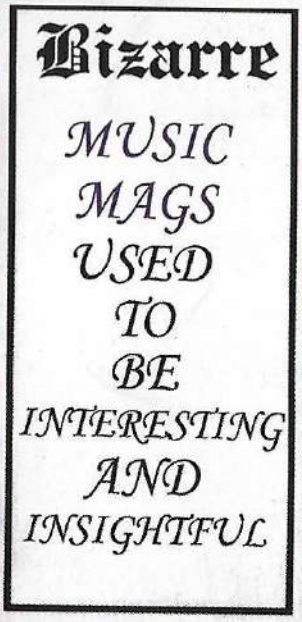

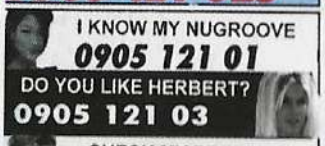

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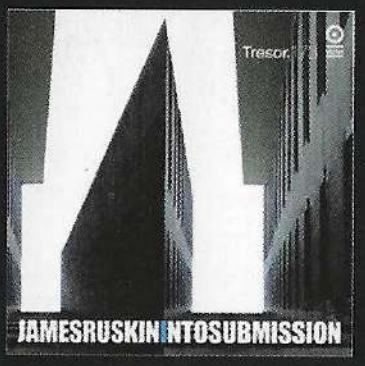

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